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ON THE
INTERNATIONAL
SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



1920

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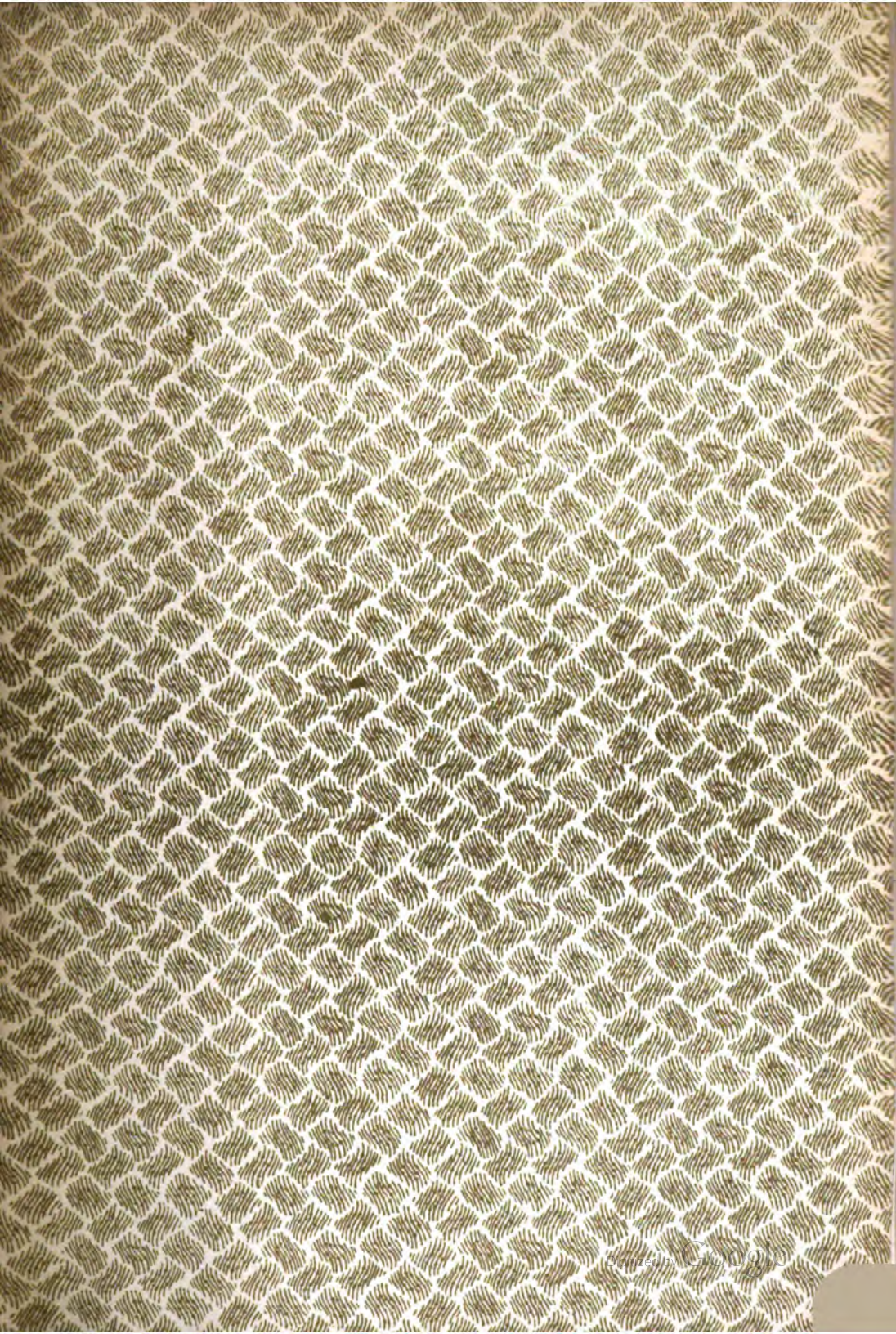
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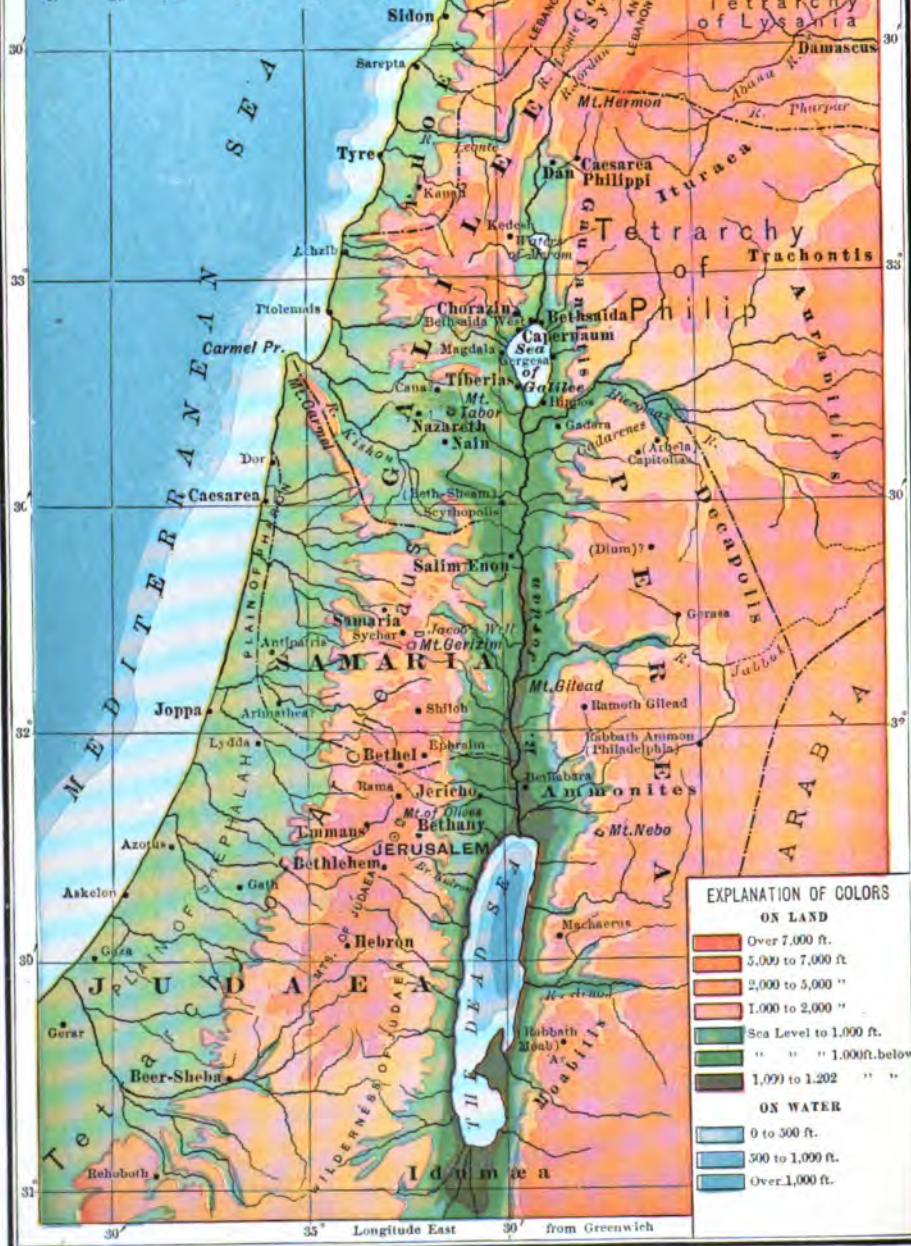
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TIME OF CHRIST

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- 2,000 to 5,000 "
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ON THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM SERIES: COURSE FOR

1920.

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Studies in the Lives of Peter and John

(SECOND HALF OF SIX-MONTHS COURSE) JAN. — MAR.

Early Leaders and Kings of Israel

APRIL — SEPT.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven

(STUDIES IN MATTHEW) OCT. — DEC.

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Forty-sixth Annual Volume.

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MAP OF PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST. MAP OF HEBREW EMPIRE UNDER DAVID AND SOLOMON.
MAP OF PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF DAVID AND SOLOMON.

FOUR FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

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CHRONOLOGY OF OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS.

LESSON.	EVENTS.	PLACE.	USSHER.	BEECHER.	REFERENCE.
SEC. QUAR. I	Death of Joshua Israel forsakes Jehovah Oppression by Cushan-rishathaim, 8 years Othniel, deliverer and judge Oppression by Eglon of Moab, 18 years Ehud of Benjamin, deliverer Oppression of Jabin of Canaan, 20 years	Timnath-serah Near Jericho	1427 1402-1394 1394-1354 1354-1336 1336	1450? 1441-1434 till 1419 1397-1380 1380	Judges 2: 8 2: 6-23 3: 1-8 3: 9-11 3: 12-14 3: 15-30
II	Deborah and Barak Oppression by Midianites 7 years	Northern tribes	1316-1296 1296	1370-1351 1351	4: 1-3 4: 4-5: 31
III	Gideon, deliverer and judge	So. Galilee	1256-1249 1249-1209	1329-1323 1323-1299	6: 1-10 6: 11-8: 35
IV	Ruth about this period? Abimelech captain of Israel 3 years Tola judge 23 years Oppression by Philistines begins Jair judge 22 years Samson judge Oppression by Ammonites 18 years Jephthah judge 6 years Ibzan judge 7 years Elon judge 10 years Abdon judge 8 years Oppression by Philistines	Shechem Mt. Ephraim Gilead S. W. Israel East Israel Gilead Bethlehem Zebulun Ephraim	1209-1206 1206-1183 1183-1116 1116-1096 1101-1143 1143-1137 1137-1130 1130-1120 1120-1112	1298-1296 1295-1273 1283 1272-1251 1250-1231 1230-1213 1212-1207 1206-1200 1190-1190 1180-1182 1182	9: 1-57 10: 1, 2 10: 6, 7 10: 3-5 13: 1-16: 31 10: 8-18 11: 1-12: 7 12: 8-10 12: 11, 12 12: 11-15
V	Eli high priest and judge	West Israel	1154-1114	1182-1142	1 Sam. 1-4
VI	Birth of Samuel	Ramah	1171?	1171?	1: 1-2: 11
V	Wickedness of Eli's sons	Shiloh	1168	1168	2: 12-36
VI	Call of Samuel	"	1161	1160?	3: 1-21
VI	Capture of ark by Philistines Samuel influential citizen	Aphek Ramah	1141 1141	1142? 1141-1122	4: 1-6: 21
VII	Victory under Samuel Samuel judge of Israel Israel asks for a king	Mizpeh Ramah	1120-1095 1095	1121-1103 1103?	7: 1-14 7: 15-17 8: 1-22
VIII	Saul, Israel's first king, chosen Saul's victory over Ammon Birth of David	Gilgal Bethlehem Gibeah	1095 1095 1095	1102 1102 1092	9: 1-10: 27 11: 1-15
IX	Jonathan and his armorbearer	Bethlehem	1079	1078?	13: 1-14: 52
X	Saul's failure and rejection	"	1065	1077?	15: 1-35
XI	Anointing of David	Bethlehem	1065	1077?	16: 1-13
THIRD QUAR. I	David in camp and court	Gibeah	1063-1062 1062	1074-1068? 1068?	16: 1-18: 24 20: 1-42
II	Jonathan befriends David David's outlaw life 7 years David spares Saul; (1) Death of Samuel	Engedi Ramah	1062-1055 1060 1060	1068-1063 1066? 1065?	21: 1-30: 31 24: 1-22 25: 1
III	David and Nabal David spares Saul (2) Death of Saul and Jonathan	Carmel Gilboa	1059 1058 1056	1065? 1065? 1063	25: 2-44 26: 1-25 31: 1-13
IV	David becomes king of Judah Civil war David king over all Israel Jerusalem made the capital Period of foreign war	Hebron	1056 1056-1048 1048	1063 1063-1056 1055	2: 4 2: 5-4: 12 5: 1-5 5: 6-9
V	Ark brought to Jerusalem The great promise to David	Jerusalem	1048-1042 1042	1055-1043 1042? 1041?	5: 10-25 6: 1-22 7: 1-29
VI	David and Mephibosheth	"	1042	1041?	9: 1-13
VII	David's great sin Birth of Solomon Preparations for building the temple Absalom's crime and exile Absalom's rebellion	" "	1033 1023	1041? 1023	11: 1-12: 23 12: 24, 25 13: 1-14: 33 15: 1-18: 33 1 Kings
IX	Death of David Solomon becomes king Solomon chooses wisdom	Jerusalem "	1015 1015 1015	1022 1022 1022	2: 10 1: 1-2: 46 3: 1-15
X	Building and dedication of the temple	Jerusalem	1012-1004	1010-1011	5: 1-8: 66
XI	Visit of the Queen of Sheba Death of Solomon	" "	995 975	995? 983	10: 1-29 11: 42, 43

CHRONOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSONS.

Studies in the Acts.

LESSON.	EVENTS.	PLACE.	DATE.	REFERENCE.
FIRST QUAR.	Resurrection and Ascension . . .		A.D. 30	Acts 1
I	Pentecost: Peter's sermon . . .	Jerusalem	30	Acts 2
II	The early church . . .	"	"	"
II	The lame man healed: Peter's second sermon . . .	"	"	Acts 3
III	The first persecution . . .	"	"	Acts 4
IV	Ananias and Sapphira . . .	"	"	Acts 5
	Preaching and martyrdom of Stephen . . .	"	35-36	Acts 6: 1-7: 60
V	General persecution . . .			Acts 8: 1-4
V	Philip the Evangelist in . . .	Samaria		Acts 8: 5-13
V	Peter and John in Samaria . . .			Acts 8: 14-25
	Philip and the Ethiopian . . .	Toward Gaza		Acts 8: 26-40
VI	Conversion of Saul of Tarsus . . .	Damascus	38	Acts 9: 1-31
VI	Peter cures Aeneas . . .	Lydda		Acts 9: 32-35
VII	Peter raises Dorcas to life . . .	Joppa		Acts 9: 36-43
VII	Cornelius the centurion . . .	Cæsarea	41	Acts 10
VIII	Question of admitting Gentiles . . .	Jerusalem		Acts 11: 1-18
VIII	First Gentile church . . .	Antioch	38-41	Acts 11: 19-26
VIII	Martyrdom of James . . .	Jerusalem	44	Acts 12: 1, 2
VIII	Imprisonment and release of Peter . . .	"	"	Acts 12: 2-19
	Death of Herod . . .	Cæsarea	"	Acts 12: 20-24
IX	First Epistle of Peter written . . .	?	62-67	
X	First Epistle of John written . . .	Ephesus	end of 1st century	
XI, XII	Revelation of St. John written . . .	Isle of Patmos	64-68 or 90-96	

Studies in Matthew.

FOURTH QUAR.	Birth of John the Baptist . . .		June, B.C. 5	(Luke)
I	Birth of Jesus . . .	Bethlehem	Dec. 25, B.C. 5	Matt. 1; (Luke)
I	Visit of the Wise Men . . .	"		Matt. 2
I	Flight into Egypt . . .	"		Matt. 2
I	Childhood and Youth . . .	Nazareth	till A.D. 26	Matt. 2; (Luke)
II	First Passover he attended . . .	Jerusalem	A.D. 8	(Luke)
II	Ministry of John the Baptist . . .	Wilderness of Judea	A.D. 26-28	Matt. 3: 1-12
II	Baptism of Jesus . . .	Jordan	Jan., 27	Matt. 3: 13-17
II	Temptation of Jesus . . .	Wilderness	Jan.-Feb., 27	Matt. 4: 1-11
	First Year of Jesus' Work . . .	Judea	Feb., 27-Mar., 28	(John)
	First disciples won . . .			
	First miracle: Cana . . .			
	First cleansing of Temple . . .			
	First discourse: Nicodemus . . .			
	First converts in Samaria . . .			
	Nobleman's son healed . . .			
III	Imprisonment of John the Baptist . . .	Macherus	Mar., 28	Matt. 14: 3-5
III	Great Galilean ministry begun . . .		Apr., 28	Matt. 4: 12
III	Takes up residence at . . .	Capernaum	"	Matt. 4: 13-17
III	Call of the first disciples . . .	"	Apr., May	Matt. 4: 18-22
III	Miracles of healing . . .	"	"	Matt. 4: 23-25
VII	Miracles of healing . . .	Galilee	"	Matt. 8: 14-17
VII	Cure of a leper . . .	"	May	Matt. 8: 2-4
VII	Healing a paralytic . . .	Capernaum	May, June	Matt. 9: 2-8
VII	Call of Matthew; his feast . . .		"	Matt. 9: 9-17
	Healing at Pool of Bethesda . . .	Jerusalem	"	(John)
IX	Discourse on the Sabbath . . .	Capernaum	"	Matt. 12: 1-14
VIII	Appointing of the Twelve Apostles . . .	Horns of Hattin	Midsummer	Matt. 10: 2-4
IV-VI	The Sermon on the Mount . . .	"	"	Matt. 5-7
VII	Healing of Centurion's Servant . . .	Capernaum	"	Matt. 8: 5-13
IX	Messengers from John Baptist . . .	Galilee	"	Matt. 11: 2-19
IX	Warnings and Invitations (Later?) . . .	"	"	Matt. 11: 20-30
IX	Blind and dumb demoniac . . .	Capernaum	Autumn	Matt. 12: 22-45
IX	Visit of mother and brethren . . .	"	"	Matt. 12: 46-50
X-XI	Eight Parables by the seaside . . .	"	"	Matt. 13: 1-53
VII	Stilling of the tempest . . .	Sea of Galilee	"	Matt. 8: 18-27
VII	Restoration of the demoniac . . .	Gergesa	"	Matt. 8: 28-34
VII	Jairus' daughter raised . . .	Capernaum	"	Matt. 9: 18-26
VII	Cure of blind and dumb . . .	"	"	Matt. 9: 27-34
IX	Second (?) rejection at Nazareth . . .	Nazareth	Winter, A.D. 29	Matt. 13: 53-58
VII-VIII	The twelve sent out to preach . . .	Galilee	"	Matt. 9: 35-11: 1
XII	Death of John the Baptist . . .	Macherus	March	Matt. 14: 1-12
XII	Feeding of the Five Thousand . . .	Bethsaida	April	Matt. 14: 13-21
XII	Jesus walks on the water . . .	"	"	Matt. 14: 22-33
XII	Heals many sick . . .	Capernaum	"	Matt. 14: 34-35
	Daughter of Syrophenician woman . . .	Phœnicia	Summer	Matt. 15
	Transfiguration of Jesus . . .	Cæsarea Philippi	"	Matt. 17

THE IMPROVED UNIFORM LESSONS.

The International Sunday School Lesson Committee prepared a provisional course for 1920, and sent it out for criticism to Sunday School editors and workers in various parts of the world. On the basis of the criticisms and suggestions thus sent in the course was revised before its final approval in December, 1917.

As in the earlier courses of this cycle uniformity is maintained by the use of a common title for the whole school, a common brief text for printing, and a common Golden Text. In a few lessons it has been found necessary to surrender this uniformity in the lesson text in order to provide a suitable lesson for every grade ; the change being usually in the Primary grade.

The lesson so selected has been adapted so far as possible to every department of the school by special topics, special memory verses, and additional material where it could be used to make the lesson more helpful to the pupils, especially in the older classes.

THE LESSON ADAPTED TO ALL GRADES.

The greatest single point of improvement of the new Uniform Lessons over the older style is the greater adaptation of the lessons to the different age groups in the Sunday School. This adaptation consists in part in providing for each lesson, in addition to the general lesson title, Bible passage, and Golden Text, the following :

1. A separate Primary Topic, Memory Verse, and at times varying Bible material for little children. These topics will be seen to be in large measure such as would attract the children, like story titles, and the lesson will be found to consist mainly of story material, so that our youngest group may become familiar with the Bible stories so loved by children of the past generations ; and learn how God has cared for his children in the past.

2. A separate Topic, Memory Verse, and at times Bible material for boys and girls of Junior age. Here, also, the work must remain largely in the story form.

3. A separate Topic and Additional Bible Material for scholars from twelve to seventeen years, — the Intermediate and Senior grades. This is a new departmental grouping adopted by the Sunday School Council in 1917. The Topic in this grade will be seen to be less concerned with the story of the Scripture than with the personal lessons the pupil can gain from it to guide his daily life. They are strongly practical.

4. A separate Topic and Additional Material for young people and adults, ages eighteen and over. These topics are of great interest as they deal with the relations of daily life with other people ; practical problems which must be solved by the people of our time, and solved soon ; and such practical philosophy as is contained in such a topic as that for July 25 : " True Success and How to Win It."

THE BASIS FOR TEACHING ALL GRADES.

This book is for the teachers of all grades in the Sunday School which use the uniform Bible material. Its purpose is to furnish the knowledge and practical applications which must underlie all good teaching — of whatever grade. It gives the story of the lesson ; interprets the words in the light of their original ; reminds the student of the secular history of the times, and the Oriental customs which so often explain the story. It gives statements of principles, or legitimate inferences, on which the teacher may securely stand and adapt his instruction to the particular grade he is teaching.

In addition there is in every lesson some teaching, or some story, anecdote, or poem, especially illustrating each different topic based on the uniform material. These are often useful to more than the grade to which they are especially attached.

The definite limits of space in this book prevent a separate treatment of each lesson for each of the separate grades. It is, however, easily possible for the busiest teacher to cull from it those portions best adapted to the needs of his class, and to leave the remainder for the teachers of the other grades.

INTRODUCTION.

REFERENCES TO LITERATURE.

For several reasons we present as fully as possible lists of books not only in the following Bibliography on the general subjects of the lessons, but in each lesson on the particular topic under the discussion. These may remind the teacher of other familiar passages in literature, differing, perhaps, in the case of each one.

This is partly that the limitations of space compel us to omit many illustrations, poems, etc., that would be helpful in illustrating the lesson. One of the most difficult parts of the preparation of the book is sometimes the choosing among the wealth of available material the one best thing for the place. While the result may not seem to all readers to be ideal, we venture to say that to write a book containing twice the material would have been less than half the work !

AN APPRECIATION FROM MARION LAWRENCE.

Especially pleasing in view of these difficulties was a note from Secretary Marion Lawrence:

"I am just in receipt from your publishers of a copy of Select Notes for 1919. How this standard commentary on the Uniform Lessons has been able to maintain itself during all these years, growing annually stronger and richer in your riper years, is a marvel to the Sunday School world. Personally I do not see how any Sunday School teacher can do his best without the rich, full helps found in these Notes. Nineteen-nineteen is the top of the heap. I do not forget the days that are gone, and how much I owe to you. May the Lord bless you more and more is the wish of Your old friend, Marion Lawrence, General Secretary."

PICTURES AS AN AID TO TEACHING.

After obtaining a knowledge of the lesson material and its applications, few aids to teaching are more effective than pictures of various kinds, especially to the classes where the story is an important part of the lesson.

One can obtain photographs of places or of great paintings; those that are colored often being even more attractive to the class. These colored pictures can be obtained from the Detroit Photographic Co.

The inexpensive pictures in half tone, giving copies of famous paintings and of scenes from nature, are most excellent for individual work in the class, especially in the preparation of the Lesson Books by the younger classes. Those published by W. A. Wilde Co. are only a cent and one half each. A list of some of the pictures appropriate for the lessons of this year are given on page 12. If more are desired, send to W. A. Wilde Co. for a catalogue containing 800 subjects.

Pictures for Adorning the Sunday School Room. Pictures of Bible scenes, whether views from nature or reproductions of good religious paintings, will be of great value if hung on the wall of the Sunday School room, or of the individual class rooms. They are an education and an inspiration. These can be procured of all sizes and at all prices.

THE STUDY OF THE HOLY LAND ITSELF.

The study of the geography, scenery, customs, etc., of the Holy Land is increasingly fascinating as the results of the great World War work out the changes which must come there, where no great change has been seen for hundreds if not thousands of years.

During this year our lessons are confined geographically to Palestine proper, and include its history from the first settlement of the Israelites after their return from the Egyptian Exile to the end of the reign of Solomon, when it had reached the broadest boundaries and the greatest power of its entire history. And they also include the study of Palestine nearly a thousand years later, at the time of our Lord, and the first few years after his death. Those who have been familiar with Palestine have told us that in the Palestine of to-day we can see illustrated all the sayings of Jesus, all the customs of his time and earlier which are referred to in the Bible. For that reason it is well to become familiar with the Palestine of yesterday before it is changed into the Palestine of to-morrow.

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For Palestine is changing ; it has already changed in part ; and will very likely, if the plans of those who have the welfare of its people at heart do not fail, become a modern land, with the greater part of its scenes and customs similar to those of the other lands which have been longer free to work out their own prosperity.

Palestine has always been promised to the Jews ; and never has another nation been able to effect a permanent settlement there. The Jews are a people without a land ; and Palestine has been, in fact, a land without a people. It has been for centuries under the hand of the Turks. But that rule has really kept the land waiting for the coming of the Jews instead of giving it a development which should transform it into a copy of other lands. If Palestine and the surrounding country " had been all this time in the possession of a strong and progressive power the land would have been opened up, developed, and fully occupied, and there would have been no room in it for the Jews to return."

In the autumn of 1918 we watched with breathless interest the British campaign in Palestine. General Allenby had in the spring captured Jerusalem in a way that seemed, to those who knew its position and defences, well-nigh miraculous. Then he proceeded toward the north. " The advance [of one week in September, 1918] led through the sacred village of Nazareth and along the west of the river Jordan, while historic names familiar to every Bible student, such as Armageddon, Tiberias, and Esdraelon, marked the course of his advance." Later the tide swept over the rest of Palestine, entered ancient Damascus, and at last forced the " unconditional surrender " of the Turkish forces.

We are hoping to see Palestine transformed into the " delightful land," the " land of Jehovah of Hosts," and the ancient promises to Israel fulfilled, — " In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice " ; and " For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

The transformation of Palestine through the successes of the Allies may morally, even if not financially, pay to all lands a great return on the cost of the war in money and lives.

One of the best methods of becoming familiar with the Palestine which is passing, and which so nearly resembles the Palestine of Christ's day, is by the **Stereoscopic Photographs**, which have again become popular because of the improvement in the pictures. They are such lifelike representations of the places where our Lord lived and walked and taught, the figures and scenes are brought out so clearly, that it is almost the same as if we were actually travelling in the Holy Land.

Underwood and Underwood (Fifth Ave. and 10th St., New York) have a series of one hundred of these pictures, in a leather case, with a book enclosing a map and a description of a tour through the Holy Land. Of course a selection of the pictures can be made. They are also constantly taking new pictures of interesting places, and it may be perfectly possible to obtain some showing the differences produced by British occupation, and the results from the Jewish colonies existing before the war.

A DIRECTOR OF READING FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

I find in the modern Sunday School, amid its marvelous progress, one missing element — at least a decided tendency toward it. I miss the Sunday School library and the up-to-date librarian ; and this missing element makes a real change in the Sunday School, in the home, and in the kind of books the children are reading.

Not very long ago I was present at a gathering of Sunday School officers, wide-awake, devoted business men doing a splendid work for their school, and the conversation was something like this :

" How is your Sunday School library prospering ? Has your librarian any new ideas and plans ? "

" Nothing doing there. We are not using the library any more ; and we have no librarian."

" But," said these officers, when remonstrated with, " the children can get their books from the public library."

Yet very few of the children, or their parents, know what are the best books, even when aided by the librarians of the public libraries.

" We need in each Sunday School a librarian who will be the Director and Guide

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of Reading that carries out the aim and purpose of the Sunday School, and makes it more effective."

"The business of the Sunday School is the religious and moral training of the young, so that they will choose Jesus as their Saviour and Leader, and be guided by him into the best life."

But the Director of Reading can do more than this, in suggesting the best books of every kind, and presenting in a few bright words the books that will attract children.

The Director should also have a teacher's library, open to all at all times, with the best books upon teaching. And new books on the subject should be added as good ones are published.

The Public Libraries will lend to the Sunday Schools the books the Director will select, in addition to those bought by the school. In this way fresh literature best adapted to the scholars will be always on hand while the standard books and especial favorites can be owned by the school.

The Director should be a permanent officer, the best who can be found for the purpose; with a great enthusiasm for aiding the children and youth.

UTILIZING SURPLUS MATERIAL.

In nearly every home, church, and Sunday School in North America, there is a quantity of surplus material which would become of great value if properly used. Rev. Samuel D. Price, D.D. (216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City), has for several years been giving all his time to the work of maintaining a connection between the sources of such "surplus material" and the places where it may become a valuable asset for Christian missionary work.

Pictures are of value for gaining an audience as well as for teaching the lesson which follows. The gift of a small picture is sure to draw. Many native preachers base their preaching largely upon the scenes in the lesson picture rolls.

Other things that are in demand are scrap books, quarterlies, books, special exercises for Christmas and Easter, and many things suitable for Christmas gifts. For this last are small toys, games which do not require much knowledge of English, ribbons, work bags, pencils, paints, knives, and marbles. Dressed dolls are eagerly desired. A suitable size is about 10 inches long. "Go-to-sleep" eyes add much to the value and little to the cost. The dolls can be simply dressed, but not in white, which is generally the sign of mourning in Oriental countries.

When writing to Dr. Price for the name of a missionary or school to which to send these, always indicate your denomination in full. The work is interdenominational, but it is usually more interesting to send to a mission field of one's own church, from which one can hear in other ways. "Enclose a stamp for your reply. Do not send any packages to the New York office."

A FEW SUNDAY SCHOOL STATISTICS.

"Fifty years ago the first Spanish-speaking Sunday School in South America was opened in Buenos Aires. Now [1918] there are 81 schools in that city and suburbs, and about 800 in all South America."

"About 1910 Sunday Schools got a footing in the Philippines, and the Sunday School union was organized the next year, with a total Sunday School membership of 8,000. Now [1918] the Sunday School membership in the islands aggregates 60,000, and last February a Sunday School convention in Manila brought together 5000 persons and ended in a torchlight procession."

"The Sunday Schools of Egypt and the Sudan made last Christmas (1917) an offering for children in Bible lands who are suffering on account of the war. The splendid total was \$11,900, most of it in coins of less than a cent in value, many of them as small as one-eighth of a cent — a gift that meant real sacrifice."

"The attendance at Sunday Schools in China in 1914 was 133,674; in 1915 it was 165,282; in 1916 it had risen to 194,978; and last year [1917] (the figures are not ready) it undoubtedly increased to 230,000. There are 4000 Sunday Schools in China, and 10,000 Sunday School teachers. The circulation of the Uniform Lesson Notes issued by the China Sunday School Union increased from 27,000 in 1911 to 168,000 in 1917."

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

"The China Sunday School Union publishes three monthly magazines, for adults and children."

"In Korea hundreds of Sunday Schools have been started for non-Christian children. They are very simple, the missionary just sitting down with the children anywhere, showing them pictures and telling them Bible stories. Some schools have met Sunday after Sunday through a long bitter winter under trees by the roadside. A Korean says: 'When I used to go to a village the children sang all sorts of heathen songs, but now I only hear "Jesus loves me."' That is a favorite Sunday School hymn."

UNITED STATES GROWTH.

"The United States Census Bureau, the most reliable source of statistical information possible, has just given out its figures in regard to the churches and Sunday Schools of our land. From them we learn that last year [1917] the Sunday School scholars ran over the twenty million mark by 569,000 and there has been an increase of 15,000 Sunday Schools. The last decade has witnessed a wonderful growth in the Sunday School hosts of the United States."

SUNDAY SCHOOL COST IN THE UNITED STATES.

"That the Sunday School business belongs to the world of 'big business' is evidenced by the fact that it costs \$30,000,000 a year to keep the Sunday School wheels going round. The greater part of this enormous outlay comes from the children. Commenting on this, one of the leading papers of Boston says: 'It is a big business that thus depends upon children for a total of \$30,000,000. Of this fully \$10,000,000 goes to the printers and publishers for lessons and lesson helps.' It is doubtful if a large percentage of even those who work in it appreciate the fact that the Sunday School is by far the biggest institution in the world devoted to the spiritual education of the boys and girls."

THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMITTEE

Selected by the International S. S. Assn.

Calhoun, Hall L., Lexington, Ky.
Eiselen, F. C., Evanston, Ind.
MacLaren, J. J., Toronto, Ont.
Price, Ira M., Chicago, Ill.
Rexford, Elson I., Montreal, Quebec.
Sampey, John R., Louisville, Ky.
Wells, Amos R., Boston, Mass.

Selected by the Sunday School Council

Barnes, Mrs. J. W., Newark, N. J.
Chalmers, Wm. E., Philadelphia, Pa.
Duncan, J. M., Toronto, Ont.
Fergusson, E. Morris, Philadelphia.
Meyer, Henry H., New York City.
Van Ness, J. J., Nashville, Tenn.
Winchester, B. S., Boston, Mass.

Selected by the Denominations

Blake, Edgar, Chicago, Ill., Methodist Episcopal, North.
Chappell, E. B., Nashville, Tenn., Methodist Episcopal, South.
Dargan, E. C., Macon, Ga., Southern Baptist.
Ellington, W. S., Nashville, Tenn., Nat. Bapt. Pub. Board.
Fries, W. O., Dayton, Ohio, United Brethren.
Lingle, W. L., Richmond, Va., Presbyterian, U. S.
Mackenzie, W. Douglas, Hartford, Conn., Congregational.
Miller, R. J., Pittsburg, Pa., United Presbyterian.
Miller, R. W., Philadelphia, Pa., Reformed Church in U. S.
Press, S. A., Evangelical German Synod.
Robertson, J. C., Toronto, Ont., Presbyterian, Canada.
Staebler, C., Cleveland, Ohio, Evangelical Alliance.
Warner, D. S., Chicago, Ill., Free Methodist.
Whitford, W. C., Alfred, N. Y., Seventh Day Baptist.
Wicker, W. E., Elon College, N. C., Christian.
Wilbur, C. E., Pittsburg, Pa., Methodist Protestant.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The lessons for this year are on both the old and the new Testaments and on both the Gospels and Acts in the New Testament. Under each lesson we have placed a list of books applicable to that particular lesson. Here we will confine ourselves to books of a somewhat broader range. We cannot guarantee that the books named are in print or obtainable at the publishers at this time, as because of conditions induced by the war such matters are very uncertain, so that statements true at this moment of writing may be untrue by the time this volume reaches the hand of its readers. But the books we give are of sufficient value to warrant some endeavor to

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

procure them ; and the most of them, if not all, can be found in public or private libraries, or on the shelves of second-hand bookstores. For the same reasons we cannot guarantee the stated prices ; but those prices were correct at a recent date.

I. GENERAL COMMENTARIES.

These commentaries are on the entire Bible, although in some instances some of the volumes are still in preparation. However, it is certainly possible that any one of those now in preparation may be ready for the student by the time he needs them to study the lessons for this year. We will therefore include them. We will also include some general works which are not strictly commentaries.

The Expositor's Bible. One or more volumes on each book of the Bible. (Doran, N. Y., 75¢ a volume.)

The Cambridge Bible. One or more volumes on each book of the Bible. (Cambridge University Press. Putnam's, N. Y. 65¢ to \$1.10 a volume.)

The International Critical Commentary. A volume on each book, or in the case of the shorter books, each two books, of the Bible, so far as they are yet prepared. (Scribner's, N. Y. Prices are about \$3.00 a volume on the average.) *Judges* is by Prof. George Moore ; *Samuel* by Prof. H. P. Smith ; *Chronicles* by Prof. Curtis ; *Matthew* by Rev. Willoughby Allen, D.D. The volumes on *Kings* and *Acts* are not published at this writing.

The Bible Commentary, Canon Cook, General Editor. (Scribner's, N. Y. 10 volumes, \$3.00 a volume.)

The One-Volume Bible Commentary, edited by J. R. Dummelow, M.A. (Macmillan, N. Y. \$2.50 net.)

New Century Bible. A volume on each book of the Bible, with a different author. (Oxford University Press, American Branch, N. Y. \$1.00 a volume.)

The Christian Workers' Commentary, covering the Old and New Testaments, by James M. Gray, D.D., Dean of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago. (Revell, N. Y. \$2.25.)

Westminster Commentaries. Only a few volumes are yet out, though it is intended to cover in time the whole Bible. The volume on *Acts* is by Rackham. (Methuen, London. \$4.50.)

Great Texts of the Bible, edited by Prof. James Hastings. (Revell, N. Y. 20 volumes, \$3.00 a volume.)

American Commentary, published by the American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia. (\$2.00 to \$3.25 a volume.)

Devotional Hours with the Bible, by Dr. J. R. Miller. A volume on each book of the Bible. (Doran, N. Y. \$1.25 a volume.)

Geikie's Hours with the Bible.

Stanley's History of the Jewish Church.

Books on general Bible Biography, such as *Old Testament Characters*, by Geikie ; *Representative Men of the Bible*, by George Matheson, D.D. (Doran, N. Y. \$1.00) ; *Whyte's Bible Characters* ; *Heroes of Israel* by Blaikie ; *Heroes of Israel* by Prof. Theodore G. Soares, Ph.D., D.D., of the University of Chicago (U. of C. Press).

II. ON THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS.

Commentaries given under I.

Samuel, His Life and Times, and *David, His Life and Time*, by W. J. Deane.

David the Shepherd, Psalmist and King, by Rev. F. B. Meyer.

The Gospel of the Pentateuch and David, by Charles Kingsley.

Solomon and His Times, by Canon Farrar.

Dated Events of the Old Testament, by Prof. Willis K. Beecher.

Modern Research in Bible lands, by Prof. S. R. Driver. (Oxford Univ. Press. \$1.50.)

Famous Men of the Old Testament, and *Famous Women of the Old Testament*, by M. B. Wharton, D.D.

Temple Series of Bible Characters. (Lippincott. 30¢ each volume.)

III. ON THE LESSONS IN MATTHEW.

Commentaries given under I.

The Expositor's Greek Testament. The Greek text with English notes. Volume I on the Four Gospels. (Doran. \$5.00 a volume.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- The Westminster New Testament.* (Revell, N. Y. 75¢ a volume.)
Bible Class Exposition by Rev. Alexander Maclaren, D.D.
The Bible for Home and School: Matthew, by A. T. Robertson. (Macmillan N. Y. 60¢.)
Expositions of Holy Scripture, by Rev. Alexander Maclaren, D.D. (Doran, N. Y. 25 volumes, \$25.)
The Man Christ Jesus, by Robert E. Speer, is a charming characterization of Christ. (Revell, N. Y. 75¢.)
The Man of Galilee, by Rev. F. W. Gunsaulus. (American Bible House, Chicago. \$2.75.)
Studies of the Portrait of Christ by Dr. George Matheson is a remarkable book. It is not a study of the representations of Christ in Art, but of the picture of him as given in the four Gospels.
The Life of Christ by Farrar, and by Geikie, and by Edersheim, are classic, and can be procured of various publishers, in various styles, and at various prices.

IV. THE LESSONS IN ACTS.

- The *Commentaries* give under I.
The general New Testament works given under III.
Pictures of the Apostolic Church, by Sir William Ramsay. (S. S. Times Co., Philadelphia. \$1.50.)
The Acts of the Holy Spirit, by Dr. A. T. Pierson. (Revell, N. Y. 75¢.)
The Early Days of Christianity, by F. W. Farrar. (Funk and Wagnalls. \$1.75.)
St. Peter the Apostle of Asia, by W. S. Auchincloss. (Van Nostrand and Co., N. Y. \$1.00.)
The Apostles as Every Day Men, by R. E. Thompson, S.T.D. (S. S. Times Co. 50¢.)
The Dawn of Christianity, or Studies of the Apostolic Church, by H. C. Vedder. (American Baptist Publication Society. 50¢ net.)

V. LIGHT FROM THE LAND.

- These include works on the geography and history of the lands and peoples of the periods studied; and works on Oriental customs, etc.
The Land and the Book, by William M. Thomson, D.D., is a classic which will never grow too old for use in this connection. (Harpers, N. Y. 3 volumes, \$9.50.)
Historical Geography of the Holy Land, by Prof. George Adam Smith, D.D., easily ranks among the first of its kind. (Doran, N. Y. \$4.00.)
Studies of Oriental Social Life, by Henry Clay Trumbull.
Jerusalem in Bible Times, by Lewis B. Paton. (Univ. of Chicago Press, \$1.00, net.)
Jerusalem from the Earliest Times to A.D. 70, by Prof. George Adam Smith. Two volumes with 13 excellent maps and plans, and 13 finely executed plates. (Armstrong. \$7.50.)
Studies in Galilee, by Ernest W. G. Masterman, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.G.S., of Jerusalem. (Univ. of Chicago Press. \$1.00, net.)
Sacred Sites of the Gospels, by Prof. W. Sanday, LL.D., with 58 plates, maps and plans. (Oxford Univ. Press. \$5.40.)

VI. BOOKS IN STORY FORM.

- On Holy Ground*, by W. L. Worcester. Bible stories beautifully illustrated with more than 500 pictures of Bible lands. (Lippincott. \$3.00.)
The Story of the Bible, by J. L. Hurlbut, D.D. Finely illustrated. (Winston Co., Philadelphia. \$1.50.)
Old Testament Stories for Little Children, by Laura Ella Cragin. (Revell, N. Y. \$1.25, net.)
The Heralds of the King, The Story of the Early Church, by Alice D. Adams, M.A., assistant to Rev. F. N. Peloubet, D.D. Profusely illustrated with pictures of places and customs named, and by reproductions of famous paintings by great masters. (The Gorham Press, Boston. \$1.00.)
A Child's Story of the Life of Christ, by Helen Brown Hoyt, with 137 half-tone illustrations. (W. A. Wilde Co. \$1.25.)

WILDE'S BIBLE PICTURE SET.

Illustrating the International Improved Uniform Sunday School Lessons for 1920.

Sixty pictures enclosed in portfolio, 75 cents, postpaid.

First Quarter.

- Lesson 1.*
758 The Apostles preaching in Jerusalem.
304 The Day of Pentecost. Adrian Van der Werff.
- Lesson 2.*
599 Healing of the Lame Man by Peter. Nicolas Poussin.
- Lesson 3.*
788 Hall of the Sanhedrin in session.
763 St. John and St. Peter. Dürer.
- Lesson 4.*
283 Death of Ananias. Raphael.
- Lesson 5.*
789 Simon Magus comes to Peter and John.
- Lesson 6.*
603 Almsdeeds of Dorcas. W. C. T. Dobson.
604 Raising of Tabitha by Peter. Carl Schönherr.
- Lesson 7.*
302 Joppa—House of Simon the Tanner.
393 Peter in the house of Cornelius. Berhard Fabritius.
- Lesson 8.*
601 The Deliverance of St. Peter from Prison. Henry Warren.
- Lesson 9.*
453 St. Peter. Fra Bartolomeo.
- Lesson 10.*
466 The Good Samaritan. B. Ploekhörst.
595 St. John the Evangelist. Domenichino.
- Lesson 11.*
279 The Vision of St. John on the Island of Patmos.
- Lesson 12.*
276 Christ in Glory. Annibale Carracci.
- Lesson 13.*

Review.

Second Quarter.

- Lesson 1.*
743 Carried into Captivity.
164 The Walk to Emmaus. B. Ploekhörst.
- Lesson 2.*
744 Sisera slain by Jael. Doré.
745 Deborah's Song of Triumph. Doré.
- Lesson 3.*
411 Gideon chooses his soldiers.
- Lesson 4.*
414 Ruth and Naomi. Philip H. Calderon.
- Lesson 5.*
417 Samuel. Sir Joshua Reynolds.
471 Child Samuel presented to Eli.
- Lesson 6.*
748 The Death of Eli.
- Lesson 7.*
749 Defeat of the Philistines by the Israelites.
- Lesson 8.*
472 Samuel anointing Saul.
- Lesson 9.*
751 Jonathan and his armorbearer.
- Lesson 10.*
474 Saul rejected as King.
- Lesson 11.*
463 Samuel anointing David. Julius von Schnorr.
- Lesson 12.*
116 The Good Shepherd. B. Ploekhörst.
- Lesson 13.*

Review.

Third Quarter.

- Lesson 1.*
685 David and Goliath. W. L. Dodge.
- Lesson 2.*
790 Friendship of David and Jonathan.
- Lesson 3.*
480 David showing Saul he had spared his life. Doré.
- Lesson 4.*
753 Rejoicing of the people on the accession of David to the throne of Israel.
- Lesson 5.*
482 King David and the Ark of the Covenant.
- Lesson 6.*
791 David's kindness to Jonathan's son.
- Lesson 7.*
741 Absalom hanged in an oak.
486 David mourning for Absalom. Doré.
- Lesson 8.*
784 David the Psalmist. From an old print.
- Lesson 9.*
755 Solomon offering burnt offerings in the temple.
- Lesson 10.*
384 Solomon's temple. Photographed from Schick's model.
- Lesson 11.*
488 Queen of Sheba at the court of Solomon. H. T. Schopin.
- Lesson 12.*
792 Training for Olympic games.
- Lesson 13.*

Review.

Fourth Quarter.

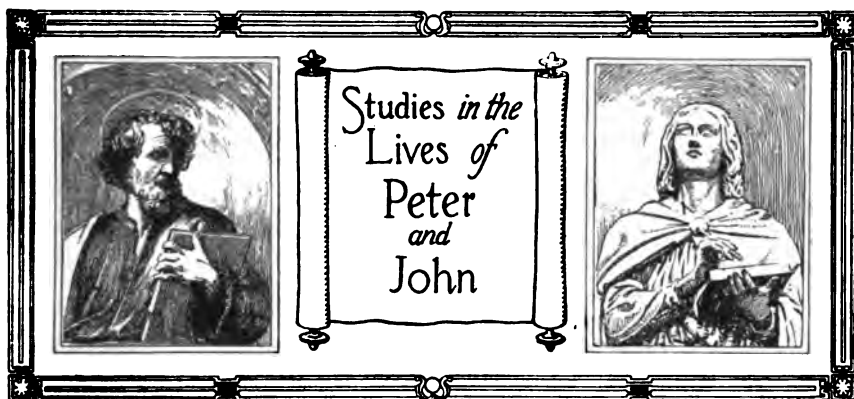
- Lesson 1.*
20 Worship of the Magi. Hofmann.
- Lesson 2.*
206 Fords of the Jordan.
547 Christ tempted by Satan. Cornelius.
- Lesson 3.*
47 Christ and the fishermen. Zimmermann.
- Lesson 4.*
65 The Sermon on the Mount. Doré.
- Lesson 5.*
670 Temperance Pledge.
- Lesson 6.*
67 "Consider the Lilies." Henry Le Jeune.
- Lesson 7.*
68 The Centurion's Servant. Veronese.
- Lesson 8.*
693 Jesus appoints the twelve.
- Lesson 9.*
695 "Come unto Me, all ye that labor." Carl Bloch.
- Lesson 10.*
694 Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.
- Lesson 11.*
77 Parable of the Sower. Roberts.
705 Parable of the Pearl of Great Price.
- Lesson 12.*
702 Miracle of the Loaves. Bida.
14 The Angels and the Shepherds. Ploekhörst.
- Lesson 13.*

Review.



Burnard.

PETER AND JOHN.



IMPROVED UNIFORM LESSONS FOR 1920.

FIRST QUARTER.

(SECOND HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE.)

LESSON I (14). — January 4.

PETER PREACHES AT PENTECOST. — Acts 2.

PRINT Acts 2 : 14, 22-24, 32-42.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*
— ACTS 2 : 21.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 16.

Additional Material for Teachers : Joel 2 : 28-32 ; John 16 : 7-15 ; Acts 1 : 1-26.

Primary Topic : PETER TELLING ABOUT JESUS.

Lesson Material : Acts 2 : 1-8, 14, 22-24, 36-40.

Memory Verse : Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16 : 15.

Junior Topic : THE STORY OF PENTECOST.

Lesson Material : Acts 2 : 1-41.

Memory Verse : Acts 1 : 8.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THREE THOUSAND WON IN A DAY.

Additional Material : Acts 4 : 4 ; 6 : 7.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE PERMANENT MEANING OF PENTECOST.

Additional Material : Luke 24 : 49 ; Acts 1 : 8, 12-14 ; 4 : 31 ; 1 Cor. 12 : 4-11.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

All grades in the Sunday School should become familiar with the story of the beginnings of the early Church, as it unfolds in this Quarter's lessons. The story itself is of vivid interest, and its applications important to all.

The younger classes will necessarily spend the greater part of the time on

the story of Pentecost, which is one of the most vivid in the Bible. Let them see that Peter was beginning to carry out his Lord's last command. Speaking of the Holy Spirit as the Helper, even the very youngest can learn to recognize His whispering in their hearts.

The Intermediate and Senior classes will find it both interesting and instructive to study in addition some of the most

famous revivals in history and in our own times, noting the characteristics which are and must be common to them all.

The older classes can discuss the working of the Holy Spirit in the minds of men; what were the permanent results of this first conscious gift of the Holy Spirit in the new dispensation; and our duty in view of the presence of the Spirit in the world.

Since this is the first Sunday in the new year, it is well for all to make some New Year's Resolutions, which they will keep throughout the year. The lesson to-day is especially adapted to explain and enforce such resolutions.

For Teachers : We will endeavor to bring every one of our scholars to Jesus.

For Parents : We will make our homes so filled with religious life that every one of our children will be attracted to Jesus.

For the Young : We will decide to-day to give our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ, and take Him as our Saviour and King.

THE BOOK OF THE ACTS.

The Author : Luke. It is the second volume of Luke's narrative of the founding of Christianity. "It is one unbroken story from beginning to end."

The Title is really "Acts," or "Deeds"; not "The Acts" as if it recorded all the acts of all the apostles; for it contains only a few such acts, selected most probably from an immense mass of material.

The Date of Writing was about A.D. 63.

The Place of Writing probably Rome.

The Language was Greek, then the speech of common life.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Book of the Acts.

The Jewish Festival of Pentecost.

The two Powers which made possible the Christian Church.

The ten days of preparation.

The symbols of the Spirit, and their significance.

The transformation of the Apostles: how proved.

Joel and his prophecy.

The gift of speaking with tongues.

Pentecosts in modern times.

The work of the Holy Spirit to-day.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Transforming Power of Pentecost.

I. THE POWERS WHICH PRODUCED THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

II. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, Acts 2 : 1-13.

III. THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE APOSTLES.

IV. THE RESULTS OF THE TRANSFORMATION.

1. Peter's Sermon, Acts 2 : 14-40.

2. Three Thousand Won in a Day, Acts 2 : 41, 42.

3. The Church Beautiful, Acts 2 : 43-47.

V. MODERN EXPERIENCES OF PENTECOST.

VI. PERMANENT LESSONS FROM PENTECOST.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

The Commentaries on the Acts. Professor Ramsay's *Pictures of the Apostolic Church.* *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, by Torrey. *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, by Prof. H. B. Swete (Macmillan, \$2.75). *The Tongue of Fire*, by William Arthur (Harpers, 75¢).

A History of American Revivals, by Frank G. Beardsley, S.T.D. (Am. Tract Soc., 50¢). Stories of the great revivals of various times and lands, — as under Savonarola, Luther, and the Huguenots; and in modern times in Wales, India, China, etc. Edwards, on Revivals.

THE LESSON IN ART.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit, by Fra Angelico,* Van der Werff,* Giotto, and an unknown artist.*

St. Peter, by Bartolommeo,* Ribera, Sarto, Thorvaldsen, and from Da Vinci's *Last Supper*.*

St. Peter Preaching, by Fra Angelico and Doré.

* In Wilde's Bible Pictures.

I. THE POWERS WHICH PRODUCED THE TRANSFORMATION. There was a period of a little more than three years, January, A.D. 27, to May 28, A.D. 30, in which were gathered the great divine forces which were the source of the Christian Church.

1. Jesus during a little more than three years did his Father's business here on the earth: he gathered disciples and trained them; he healed all manner of sickness and infirmities; he taught the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the conditions for entering therein; he lived a life of prayer; and set his disciples the task of winning the world to the Kingdom which he had come to this earth to found.

These things we read in the Four Gospels. It is for us to keep Jesus and his

work always before us ; to keep doing the kind of things that he did ; to endeavor to serve mankind as he served it ; to be loyal to him as our Teacher, Saviour, and Friend ; and to follow him as our Leader and King.

2. Jesus crowned his work for mankind by his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead : his death, as the atonement for the sins of the world ; his resurrection, as proving his power over death, and his existence as an ever-living Saviour and Helper, even unto the end of the world.

3. The coming of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus had promised in his last conversation with his disciples (John 16 : 7), which is our particular lesson for to-day.

There were, then, two powers which made the existence of the Christian Church a possibility.

First Power: The living Saviour, risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven ; the King to be loved and served ; the Saviour to be proclaimed the Guide and Director of the movement ; the Source of authority and power.

Second Power: The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come ; the transformer of souls ; the strength in weakness ; the guide into all truth.

Without these two powers nothing could have been accomplished.

II. THE COMING OF THE POWER, Acts 2 : 1-13. 1. THE TEN DAYS' PRAYER MEETING. Jesus ascended to heaven on May 18, as we can learn through the study of the dates of the Jewish Passover. This was 40 days after the resurrection (Acts 1 : 3). The Jewish festival of Pentecost, made forever a Christian festival by the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Disciples of Jesus, was fifty days after the Passover, and therefore ten days after the Ascension. These ten days were spent by the little group of Christians in a continued prayer meeting, waiting for the promise which Jesus had made to them as he left them (Acts 1 : 5).

Those attending this prayer meeting were not merely the eleven Apostles, but all the followers of Christ who were able, and wished, to be there. There were women there (Acts 1 : 14), and some men who were apparently prominent among Christ's followers, of whom we know nothing but their names and their presence at this time (Acts 1 : 23). The total number is given as 120 (Acts 1 : 15), although we do not know whether this was the total number meeting there, or the number present at the choosing of the new apostle.

These disciples gathered in an upper room, praying, and waiting for the fulfilment of the promise, that they might be prepared for the overflowing Blessing. There are two ways in which God answers prayers for spiritual gifts: (1) by the gift itself, (2) the other by making the soul capable of receiving the gift in full measure. Both kinds of answers were given to this praying company.

2. THE SCENE ON THE MORNING OF PENTECOST. 1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come. The reckoning of the day began at sunset of the day previous. This was the dawn in the morning, the full coming of the day.

2. A sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. There was no wind ; only a sound which is best described as the sound of a wind. It — the sound — filled all the house where they were sitting, and was even heard beyond its walls (v. 6).

3. Cloven tongues. Revisions, "tongues parting asunder." Not each tongue cleft into two parts, forked, but "the fire was in the form of tongues which distributed themselves over the company, a tongue settling on the head of each one." — *Rackham*. Like as of fire. Not real fire, as an organ of destruction, but with



From an old print.

The Day of Pentecost.

the appearance and brightness of fire, like that of the Burning Bush. And it sat upon each of them. The appearance was not a momentary flash, but the influence which it symbolized was to be permanent.

"Swiftly and straight each tongue of flame
Through cloud and breeze, unwavering came,
And darted to its place of rest
On some meek brow of Jesus blest;
And still those lambent lightnings stream;

Where'er the Lord is, there are they;
In every heart that gives him room
They light his altar every day,
Zeal to inflame and vice consume."
— John Keble.

4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Spirit). There was no distinction between the apostles and the others; or even between the men and the women. "Filled" can mean nothing less than that the whole capacity of each man was occupied, and all his being under the influence. The degree of receptivity varied, no doubt, but the lesser and the greater vessels were all full." — *MacLaren*.

And began to speak with other tongues than their own native language, which was probably Greek or some form of Hebrew. No doubt some spoke in one tongue, some in others, which would account for the fact that dwellers out of every nation under heaven heard them speak in their own native tongues (vs. 5-11); and also for the fact that to some of the hearers it was merely such incoherent babbling as might be produced by indulgence in strong drink (v. 13).

As the Spirit gave them utterance, not of themselves, and they spoke of the wonderful works of God (v. 11).

It was the remarkable manifestation of a power far beyond what any man could do. The signs that accompanied the coming of the power were to reveal the fact, "in letters that could be read from the stars," that the invisible Holy Spirit was actually present, to make the fact clear and unmistakable, to show the source whence the power and its effects came, and to illustrate its nature. We know that an unseen power exists by what it does. The sound, the flame, the speaking with tongues, were proofs of the unseen power of the Spirit. The Apostles could not know and realize the presence of the Holy Spirit without some manifestations that made it known to the senses. No one ever saw the greatest forces in the world. No one ever saw electricity, or gravitation, or chemical forces. We know them only by what they do. We know the Holy Spirit by what He did and is still doing, especially in His transformation of people.

Illustration. One day at Niagara Falls I visited the city power-house. Descending a hundred feet underground amid the whirl of the great turbines, we came to a small brick compartment only a few feet square within which were several black pillars made of coils of wire, but looking as innocent as iron posts. We were told that there was flowing through those dark wire coils an electric force equal to from seventy thousand to a hundred thousand horse-power; that it moved every electric car in the region, lighted the streets of the city, and brought daylight into the homes of the citizens. We rode up and down the rapids in electric cars moved by that current, walked the streets and read our letters by the light it produced. We knew the greatness of the power by what it was doing.

So we know the power of the Holy Spirit to renovate the soul and transform the world, by the multitude of souls He has already transformed into saints.

The proof grows more complete when we see the 3000 converted, and it has been growing stronger and stronger all down the ages. The Christian Church is the proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit. He inspires, comforts, strengthens, guides into truth, renews the character, convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, gives power and joy and peace, awakens new life, produces in us all the fruits of the Spirit, makes us temples of the Holy Ghost, fits us for eternal glory.

"The simple truth is that Christianity itself, with this Somebody left out, is more of an incredible miracle than the most wonderful acts that have ever been ascribed to the spirit of Jesus. There is no other explanation possible for the rise and power of the religion of Christ except the irresistible power of an omniscient, omnipresent, supernatural Spirit." — *William T. Ellis*.

"We are but organs mute, till a master touches the keys —
Verily, vessels of earth into which God poureth the wine;
Harps are we, silent harps that have hung on the willow trees,
Dumb till our heartstrings swell and break with a pulse divine."

The Three Symbols of the Holy Spirit. 1. *The Wind.* "The Greek word was used in both senses, wind and spirit, by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:8)." — *Cook*.

14. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words :

- (1) It is an invisible power.
- (2) It is the breath of life.
- (3) It is all-pervasive.
- (4) It is very powerful in its action.

2. *The Flame.* John the Baptist had said that "Jesus shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Fire is one of the most expressive symbols of the Holy Spirit. Fire, shining in light, is mysterious in nature, ineffably bright and glorious, everywhere present, swift-winged, undefiled and undefilable.

(1) It represents the revealing power of the Holy Spirit, shining into each soul ; as the illumination of a house by a lamp, or as a twilight scene when the sun rises upon it.

(2) It expresses the cleansing, purifying power of the Spirit. Fire and light are the great disease killers. So is the Spirit to moral diseases. He is the refining fire that cleanses the pure gold from the enfolding dross.

(3) It symbolizes the comfort, warmth, cheer, fresh life, joy, peace, which the Holy Ghost imparts.

(4) Fire is the symbol of intense energy and zeal. The Holy Spirit fills the soul with glowing enthusiasms and unconquerable energy and zeal for God.

3. *The Tongues.* (1) These represented the means by which the disciples were to spread the Gospel. But it needs to be a tongue of fire, of the light of truth, of the warmth of comfort.

(2) It is the symbol of the proclamation of the Gospel to all nations and in all languages.

(3) It is the expression of whatever is within us, the revelation of our deeper feelings.

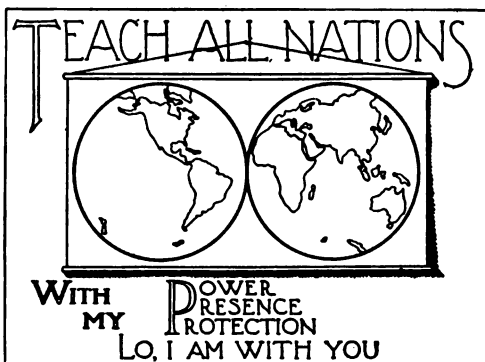
There were people present at this feast from all the nations, and thus was the truth of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, spread over all the world.

III. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE APOSTLES. One effect of this gift of the Holy Spirit was the wonderful change it produced in the apostles. It was almost a transfiguration experience. So the dead wire is thrilled with electricity, and bursts out into light and power. They were common men no longer. As Mosheim says, "Their ignorance was turned into light, their doubts into certainty, their fears into a firm and invincible fortitude, and their former backwardness into an ardent and inextinguishable zeal." Note especially the change in Peter from the man who, less than two months before, had forsaken his Lord, and thrice denied him. But the risen Christ had forgiven Peter and restored him to his apostleship.

"I hold it truth with one who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things." — *Tennyson.*

IV. THE RESULTS OF THE TRANSFORMATION. 1. **PETER'S SERMON,** Acts 2 : 14-40. One of the strongest evidences of the transformation of Peter was in the sermon which he preached to the multitude this Pentecost morning. There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven, come there to be present at the two great Jewish feasts, the Passover and Pentecost, which were less than two months apart.

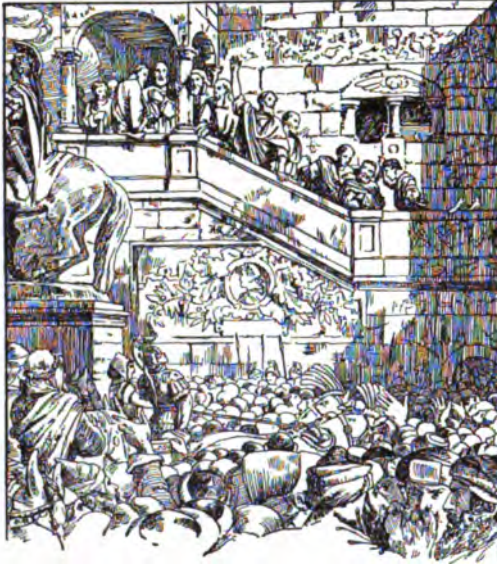
These men probably had no regular occupation, and could and doubtless would



Blackboard Suggestion.

22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

investigate any peculiar happening in the city. When this was noised abroad, the strange events accompanying the coming of the Spirit. It is uncertain whether this means that the noise like a wind was heard throughout the city, or whether, as is more probable, the noise had been heard by some outside the room where the disciples were gathered, and the report of the matter had spread abroad. The crowd gathered, and hearing the disciples speaking with other tongues were all amazed and marvelled.



Peter Preaching.

But there was a difference of opinion among the people as to what the disciples were really doing, and what was its cause. Those who only understood the common tongues of Palestine would think it a mere unmeaning babble. These, and perhaps some of the others, felt that it was traceable to strong drink, — *These men are full of new wine* (v. 11).

Therefore Peter, the natural leader of the disciples, stood up, surrounded by the others, and began by taking advantage of the perplexity of the people and their questionings, and especially of the charge in verse 11. This charge he, however, brushed away as absurd. "In the East men drink only in the evening." — *Geikie*.

The Appeal to the Prophets, vs. 14-21. Peter then appealed to the Jewish Scriptures which

were familiar to them from childhood, and were believed by them all. He said: What has taken place in your presence is exactly what your prophets foretold would characterize the Messianic times for which you are hoping. Turn to the prophet Joel [written 600 years B.C.] and you will see that both what has been done for the disciples here, and the things you are suffering under the Roman yoke, are the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of these times:

"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams."

Every wise and good man is always seeing visions, — how to be more useful, how to grow wiser in his service, how to overcome faults, how to live nearer to God.

"In youth, beside the lonely sea,
Voices and visions came to me;
In every wind I felt the stir
Of some celestial messenger." — *Aldrich*.

God gives us these visions and dreams to lead us on to the best things of life. The whole church should keep before her the vision of a perfect manhood and womanhood, perfect business ideals, perfect national and international relations, a perfect church, a perfect world, the city of God.

Better Engines and Hotter Fires. A railroad man was once asked what was the line of greatest improvement in railroads. His reply was, "Better engines and hotter fires." That is exactly what the churches and all reformers need to-day — better

23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain :

24. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death : because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

engines, better equipment, means of working, and hotter fires of zeal, till it can be said of each one of us, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up."

Fighting the Evils. The very visions and dreams led to strange events which were signs of spiritual changes, and divine movements. **In the earth beneath ; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke ;** the wars and tumults, and destruction of men, as in the capture of Jerusalem, and many a war and commotion since, arising from the conflict of evil and good. These are signs that the Gospel is alive and active, that the truth is not dead, that moral winter is giving way before the coming of spring. The battle is the sign of victory. So Christ himself says : "I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10 : 34). This is a universal principle. First disturbance, overturning, discussing, criticising, unsettling, as the way to better things.

Jesus told his disciples (Luke 21 : 25-28) about the terrible times that were near at hand, — distress of nations, perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles, the powers of heaven shaken, — and then the Son of Man coming with power and great glory. Then, "when these things begin to come to pass," Jesus, with wonderful assurance, calls to his disciples, **LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH.**

For parallel with the signs and wonders of the terrible times were to be signs and wonders of another kind, — signs of the moral transformation of the character of men ; wonders of the spread of the Gospel among the nations, marvels of heroic martyrdoms, miracles of healing, helping the poor with brotherly love.

Modern Applications. This early part of the twentieth century is very like the time of the early Church. Never has there been a greater conflict between good and evil than to-day. The people are everywhere rising up against wrongs and oppression. Tumults, commotions, upheavals, wars, follow. The conscience of good people is awakening, and the churches are fighting against wrong. No greater signs and wonders ever were than now on mission fields, in education, in healings, in a thousand efforts to make the world better. These too are signs that the Gospel is still a living force to be reckoned with by the powers of evil. Men, or devils, do not fight a dead enemy.

Peter Announces that the Messiah Has Come, vs. 22-36. From the general statement of the fact that the events they had witnessed were the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Messianic times by the prophet Joel, Peter goes on to declare that not only were the Messianic times already come, but that the Messiah himself had come, — Jesus of Nazareth.

Peter makes several clear points in his argument that Jesus fills the conditions of the Messiah.

(1) The promised Messiah was to be the son of their king David. Jesus was the son, *i.e.* descendant, of David ; and David himself foretold that this son should be the Christ, *i.e.* the Messiah raised up to sit on his throne (v. 30).



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The Hope of the World.

32. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.
 33. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.
 34. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, the LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
 35. Until I make thy foes thy footstool.
 36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

(2) Jesus was proved to be the expected Messiah by the miracles, wonders, and signs which God wrought by him, as Peter's hearers well knew. These miracles expressed the loving kindness of God toward men; they were invitations to come to Jesus. But they had delivered this Messiah to the Romans; they by wicked hands had crucified and slain the very Messiah they had so long and so eagerly looked for.

(3) But the death of Christ was not a defeat, was not an overthrow of God's plans, as it would seem to the people, but an essential part of the divine plan for the Messiah and the scheme of redemption. Jesus made atonement for sin by giving his life on the cross to save mankind. He did this freely, according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (v. 23), by which every part of God's plan of salvation was foreknown and planned, as shown in the Old Testament.

(4) Jesus was alive, he had been raised from the dead, — Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains (pangs) of death. No one but God could do this; and it was necessary for the proof of Jesus' Messiahship. A dead Jesus could not be their promised Messiah. David seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ that his soul was not left in hell (Hades, the place of the dead) neither his flesh did see corruption (vs. 25-31). The glorious hope of immortal life is assured to all who believe and obey the Lord Jesus, the ever-living Saviour.

(5) The promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit, made by Jesus to his disciples, has been fulfilled, as ye have seen and heard (v. 33).

(6) In view of these things all the house of Israel may know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (v. 36).

Peter Shows the People the Way to be Saved, vs. 37-40. The people now realized their sin and crime. "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit . . . and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."

They saw that they had committed an awful crime against God and the nation and themselves. They had rejected their best friend and Saviour. They were in danger of the judgment to come. They were in danger of being overwhelmed in the awful times not far distant, when the Temple and Jerusalem should be destroyed. They therefore asked Peter and the rest of the Apostles . . . What shall we do?

Peter gives them three steps to take for their salvation. *First: REPENT.* Repentance means such a change of mind and heart and purpose as leads to a change of conduct; a spiritual revolution of the soul, so that one hates sin and wrong with the whole heart. So that the sins "are removed as far as the East is from the West." "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

Second: MAKE PUBLIC CONFESSION BY BAPTISM INTO THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST. It was an act of consecration to the service of Jesus Christ, and to the Kingdom of Heaven. It was like taking an oath of allegiance when one becomes a citizen of a new country.

Third: As a result of these two steps, you will BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST, and the other blessings which should follow. They should receive remission of sins, the forgiveness of the sins, the removal of the penalty, and of the love of sin. Saved from sin, not in sin. The sinner having put away sin is welcomed back into the family of God.

They should receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit, working such changes and transformations of character and life as had been wrought in the apostles and the others. Sometimes it would come in the same or a similar form as that in which they had just seen it manifested; and always in his abiding presence, dwelling within them as a fountain of life (John 7 : 38), as the Comforter, teaching, guiding, inspiring, helping, purifying, giving peace and hope and joy, according to the promise

37. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

42. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

(John 13-16). For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off (including those who are living to-day), *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

One of the chief hindrances to becoming disciples, and one of the chief dangers to which the new disciples were exposed, came from the character of the people around them. So Peter exhorts them, saying, *Save yourselves from this untoward (crooked) generation.* They had to resist these plausible and cunning and powerful men, to break away from false doctrine, defy selfish authority, to forsake old friends, to endure derision, hatred, and persecution. This was no small thing to do. It acted as a sieve to sift out false disciples, and keep the church sincere and pure.

2. THREE THOUSAND WON IN A DAY, vs. 41, 42. Through this one effort of the Apostles, with the all-efficient aid of the Holy Spirit, 3000 converts were added to the little number of the disciples of Jesus. Many, or all of them, were doubtless from among the multitudes who had heard Jesus himself, and seen his miracles. The immensity of the proportion of the results is a convincing proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Not even the transformed Apostles could have produced such results by a single day's labor.



Jewish Synagogue.

3. THE CHURCH BEAUTIFUL, vs. 43-47. Another result of the wonderful transformation of the Apostles, and the other disciples of Jesus, was the character of the church itself. Bunyan's word picture of the Palace Beautiful is the most perfect picture of the church and its ordinances in all literature. The lions in the way before coming; the porter Watchful, welcoming the pilgrim at the door;

the examination by the gentle maidens, Piety, Prudence, and Charity, with their discourse at the supper; the sleeping in the Chamber of Peace; the study of the records of the place; the vision of the Delectable Mountains; and the putting on the armor for future warfare — make altogether a fitting picture of the "house built by the Lord of the hill, for the relief and security of pilgrims."

These verses give several characteristics of the Church Beautiful, which should be hints for our own church life.

1. *The Church Learning*: by listening to the teaching of the Apostles repeating what Jesus had taught them. Disciples are learners.

2. *The Church Fellowship*: like one loving family, in sympathy, almsgiving, and mutual help. Personal influence is one of the strongest factors in education, in the formation of character, and the guidance of life. No hermit life can be as effective in Christian growth and usefulness as a life of fellowship with the true saints.

3. *The Church Worshipping*: by eating together, especially in partaking together of the Lord's Supper, or of love feasts in the houses of those who lived in Jerusalem. And in prayers in the synagogues, — for they did not yet break with the Jewish church, — in the Temple at the regular hours, and in private houses. And the ascended Jesus was with them.

4. *The Church at Work*. Fear came upon every soul, reverential awe in the presence of the mysterious power working such wonders of grace and love. And many wonders and signs were done by the apostles, the same kind as those done by Jesus, to aid and cure and save those who needed help.

5. *The Church Benevolent*. The Christians had some general meeting place, and had all things common. They were members of one family and held things in common just as members of a family do. Everything was for the good of all. No one "said that anything was his own," but all was for the use of friends and of whatever Christian had need. There were so many who had come from distant countries that it was necessary for those who had homes in Jerusalem and its vicinity to keep open house. The call for help was so great that those who were well-to-do sold some of their property to enable them to support the Christian strangers in their need.

6. *The Church Joyful*. "They took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people." (Am. R.)

7. *The Church Growing*. "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved." (Am. R.)

A church with the first five of these characteristics will always have the other two.

V. **MODERN EXPERIENCES OF PENTECOST.** To thoroughly develop this point we should have to recount the entire history of the Christian Church for the

nearly two thousand years of its existence. The Holy Spirit has come into the hearts of men at all times and places, in all ways; into individuals and into crowds; but always with the same results of spiritual awakening of the individual and the Church to which he belonged.

All through the centuries have there been revivals where the Church won its converts by the scores, the hundreds, and even the thousands. Study the revivals under Savonarola, Luther, the Wesleys, Edward Whitefield, and many others.

The condition of the mission fields is strong evidence for this pentecostal experience, and a great encouragement for those who are fearing that the world is drifting from Jesus and his teachings.

Progress in China. In the *Select Notes* for 1919, page 77, we told something of the work of Mr. Sherwood Eddy and Dr. John Mott among the students of China, and referred the reader to Mr. Eddy's book, *The New Era in Asia*, for the full account of the wonderful results attained. This book should again be studied for this lesson.

But that tour of China was several years ago. Did the results continue? Was anything permanent gained? Would another tour of the same sort meet with encouragement, or was it largely a matter of curiosity this first time, so that another visit would fail of great accomplishments?



Museum of St. Mark, Florence.
Savonarola. (Fra Bartolommeo.)

In February, 1918, Mr. Sherwood Eddy and his party arrived at Canton, China, for another evangelistic campaign. The story is rather briefly told in *The Congregationalist and Advance* for May 2, 1918. The account is written by Rev. Charles A. Nelson of the American Board's South China Mission.

Brief as the account is, it is too long to be transcribed here. A few brief points only can be cited.

"On Monday and Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9 o'clock admission to the meeting place was by ticket. Only those who brought one or more unconverted persons were allowed to be present. But as 1400 had signed beforehand as Personal Workers for others, the audience filled the room at the Y. M. C. A., which seats 1200. Tuesday evening was made the Decision Evening, when several hundreds signed cards signifying that they accepted Christ as their Saviour."

But China cannot work out her own salvation unaided. "After all the 'follow-up work' is the most important. It is here we have failed in the past. Are we to fail again? . . . After similar meetings three years ago, in a certain city, of 435 men who signed cards only 30 found their way into the churches."

But this may not represent all the results of the meetings even in that one city. And all over China there have been great results from the teaching of the Christians; whether attributable to one worker or another is a matter of less moment.

The Congregationalist of Feb. 14, 1918, in an article by Rev. Parris T. Farwell, "The Progress of the Kingdom," under the heading of "China," says: "A striking example of the growing influence of Christianity in China was shown during 1917 by the success of the Christian forces in keeping from the newly devised constitution any assertion of Confucianism as the state religion. 'The Confucianists fought hard for it. Christian pastors and leaders united in opposition; and they won the day.'"

VI. PERMANENT MEANING OF PENTECOST. What is the lesson of Pentecost to us? There are many, and important ones. We will name only:

1. *Keep near to God in united prayer.*

"There were only two or three of us
Who came to the place of prayer,
Came in the teeth of a driving storm;
But for that we did not care,
Since after our hymns of praise had risen,
And our earnest prayers were said,
The Master Himself was present there,
And gave the living bread.

"We knew His look in our leader's face
So rapt and glad and free;
We felt His touch when our heads were bowed,
We heard His 'Come to me.'
Nobody saw Him lift the latch,
And none unbarred the door;
But 'peace' was His token to every heart,
And how could we ask for more?"

"And forth we fared in the bitter rain,
And our hearts had grown so warm,
It seemed like the pelting of summer flowers,
And not the crash of a storm;
'Twas a time of the dearest privilege,
Of the Lord's right hand,' we said,
As we thought of how Jesus Himself had come
To feed us with living bread."

—Margaret Sangster, in *Record of Christian Work*.

2. *Make large preparations.* "When God is to be your partner, make your plans large," said Mr. Moody.

3. *Believe in the coming of the power, and work on that belief.* "Heaven never commands a man to do the impossible without giving him power to fill the order. . . . I once went to a man and said, 'Old fellow, I want you to take a class of young colts in my Sunday School at Rock Run.' 'What, me?' he cried, 'Why, I couldn't teach 'em to play marbles, let alone the Bible.' Which was exactly true. But for twenty-odd years John Doan has been by my side building up young manhood and leading men into the kingdom. John had the religion and Heaven furnished the power (Phil. 4 : 13 ; 2 Cor. 12 : 9)."

LESSON II (15). — January 11.

PETER AND JOHN HEAL A LAME MAN. — Acts 3.

PRINT Acts 3:1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Freely ye have received, freely give.* — MATT. 10:8.

Devotional Reading : Isaiah 35.

Additional Material for Teachers : Matt. 10 : 7, 8 ; Mark 1 : 29-34 ; 9 : 27 ; Luke 4 : 40 ; John 14 : 12 ; 1 Peter 4 : 11.

Primary Topic : A LAME MAN MADE WELL.

Lesson Material : Acts 3 : 1-16.

Memory Verse : Have faith in God. Mark 11 : 22.

Junior Topic : PETER AND JOHN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE.

Lesson Material : Acts 3 : 1-16.

Memory Verse : Acts 3 : 6.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : FAITH AND THE HELPING HAND.

Additional Material : Mark 1 : 31 ; 9 : 27 ; Luke 4 : 40.

Topic for Young People and Adults : HELPING MEN TO HELP THEMSELVES.

Additional Material : Same as for Teachers.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

A most practical lesson. No theoretical teaching of a virtue has any lasting results unless it is put into actual practice. Christian character building through a careful study of the Bible is our fundamental aim. The Bible, therefore, must be shown to be not only a book of stories of persons who have lived ages before our time ; not only a book of fine moral maxims ; but also a guide book — a text-book of life. Its principles must be applied to different measures for different times and circumstances. The actual form of the application of these principles will depend upon the pupil's age and circumstances.

The **Primary** and **Junior** teachers will emphasize the lesson of helpfulness, readiness to help in whatever way we are able, and how even children can help in many ways. They can show that Christian people, religious people, are as a general rule the kindest, and most ready to help others.

The **Intermediate** and **Senior** classes should have developed the necessity of faith and can study the value of the personal touch in helping others. Note in the Additional Material how often Jesus emphasized this personal quality of his help.

The older classes can make a most valuable practical application to modern times in noting what was asked, and what was given. They can in this way go deeply into questions of social betterment, and the whole question of "organized charity."

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

A review of the characters of Peter and John.
The value of their association in Christian work.
Why were miracles of healing so common in the work of Jesus and His disciples?
Beggars in the Orient, then and now.
Why did the disciples always attribute their power to Jesus?
Such as I have give I unto thee: the application to ourselves.
What connection did faith on the part of the cripple have with his healing?
How was Peter's gift better than silver or gold?
What is the best way to help the poor to-day?

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

The **Time** is not given, but it was probably not long after Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, in the summer of A.D. 30.

The **Place**. — Jerusalem, in the Temple. The healing was at the Beautiful Gate, leading into the Court of the Women. The sermon was preached in Solomon's Porch, just outside that gate, in the Court of the Gentiles.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on the Acts, such as : *The Expositor's Greek Testament* ; *Westminster Commentary* ; *American Commentary* ; *The New Century Bible* (the volume on Acts by Bartlett) ; *Cambridge Bible* ; *Bible for Home and School* (Gilbert) ; *The Teacher's Commentary* (F. N. Peloubet). Books on Social Service ;

Charity; the Church and the Working Man, etc.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: Peter and John Heal the Lame Man.

- I. PETER AND JOHN ON THEIR WAY TO WORSHIP, v. 1.
- II. THE LAME MAN AT THE GATE, v. 2.
- III. FAITH AND THE HELPING HAND, vs. 3-10.
- IV. PETER'S APPLICATION OF THE MIRACLE, vs. 11-26.
- V. HELPING MEN TO HELP THEMSELVES.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Life*. Phillips Brooks, *Sermons*, vol. 4, on "The Beautiful Gate of the Temple." Dr. A. J. Gordon's *Ministry of Healing*. The poem "Wrought into Gold." Whittier's *Poems*, "Our Master."

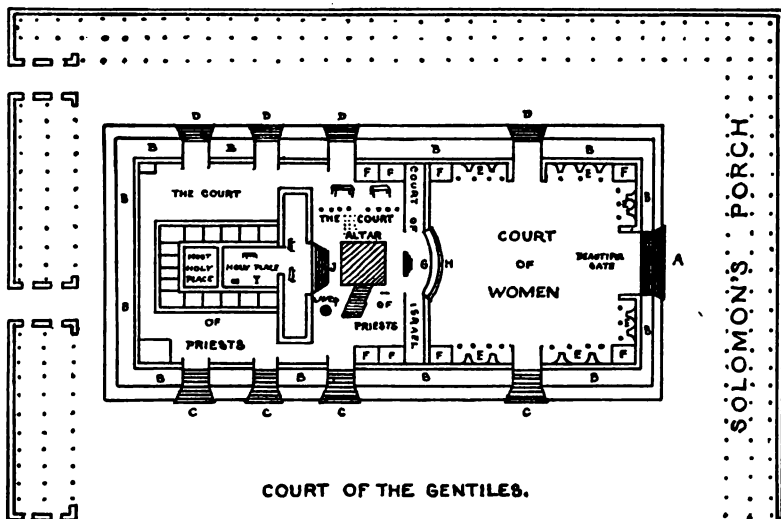
THE LESSON IN ART.

Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate, by Raphael.*
Healing of the Lame Man, by Poussin.*
Peter and John Distributing Alms, by Massaccio.

1. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth hour.

An Ancient Example of the Helping Hand.

I. PETER AND JOHN ON THEIR WAY TO WORSHIP, v. 1. The regular afternoon prayer service in the temple was conducted by the priests at three o'clock, the ninth hour of the day. At this time the priest came into the Holy Place to the golden Altar of Incense, on which was placed a compound of sweet gums and spices especially prepared for use in this way, and forbidden for other use (Ex. 30:34-38).



Plan of the Temple in the Days of the Apostles.

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Where the lame beggar met Peter and John. | E. Money chests. |
| B. Terraces. | F. Courts and Chambers. |
| C, D. Gates to the Holy House. | G, H. Steps and gate to Court of Priests. |
| | I. Steps up to the Holy Place. |

The Altar of Incense was in the Holy Place, with the Candlestick and Table of Shewbread.

The worshippers in the Court of the Women, separated from the Holy Place by the Court of the Priests, could yet see the altar of sacrifice, the type of consecration and forgiveness, and most of them could see the golden altar of incense within the holy

2. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

sanctuary, and all could witness the ascending smoke of the incense, the symbol and visible expression of prayer. It was an aid to devotion, as all forms of worship are intended to be. The voice, the natural forms, the bowed head, are real helps to the sincere spirit; and the spirit, as President Mark Hopkins used to say, will die out if all natural forms of expression are neglected.

Peter and John were two of the chiefest of the Apostles, and the most advanced in the knowledge of Jesus. They were perhaps "the oldest and the youngest of the noble twelve." Widely different in character, they were closest of friends, alike in principle, devotion, and purpose.

These, leaving their homes or places of abode in the city, walked up the temple hill together. They passed through the outer gate into Solomon's pillared portico and the Court of the Gentiles, which they crossed, and went toward the steps which led up into the Court of the Women, in which men and women worshipped together, and beyond which the women were not allowed to go.

II. THE LAME MAN AT THE GATE, v. 2. This was the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful. There were ten gates belonging to the temple, and it is not certain which one is referred to. But it was probably the magnificent doors of Corinthian brass described by Josephus, leading from the Court of the Gentiles into the Court of the Women, which was reserved for the ordinary religious offices of the Jewish people. These doors were 75 feet high, and adorned with plates of silver and gold.

Compare the magnificent gates to the cathedrals of Europe, especially the splendid bronze doors of the Baptistry at Florence, which Michelangelo said were fit to be the gates of Paradise.

Our Gates Beautiful. There are many gates in life to higher and better things. The Gate of



Bronze Gates by Ghiberti in the Baptistry, Florence.

The ten panels depict scenes from the Old Testament from the Creation to the Days of Solomon. In some of these little sculpture groups there are as many as one hundred figures as well as a background, and yet so deft is the arrangement that they do not seem crowded. There are nowhere else in the world gates to rival these.

Hope, the Gate of Love, the Gate of Character, the Gate of Faithfulness, the Gate of Prayer. Jesus Christ is the Beautiful Gate to Eternal Life.

When Peter and John approached this gate they saw there a lame beggar. All we know of the history of this beggar is, (1) that he was born with the cause of his lameness, making the cure more wonderful; (2) that it was caused by a weakness of the feet and ankles (v. 7); (3) that it was so bad that he could not walk, but had to be carried; (4) that he was poor; (5) that he was over forty years old (4: 22).

"As this gate was the principal entrance, fortunate was the beggar who could secure a seat there. The same custom continues without the slightest change throughout the East. The lepers, the blind, the cripples, have each their accustomed spot in the thoroughfares, but especially outside the city gates, and outside the doors of the mosques, to which they are led or carried daily by their friends, and

3. Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.
4. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.
5. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.
6. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.
7. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.
8. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.
9. And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

where they sit, with their wooden bowls in front of them to receive the alms of the passers-by, uttering their piteous, ceaseless wail." — *Tristram*.

"At Cairo the blind, or the sick, or the crippled, sat at every street corner, and on every square; were laid at every mosque door, and were crying out for help or for an alms before every bazaar. . . . Palestine now, as was doubtless the case in the days of our Lord, seems fairly overrun with those afflicted by one form or another of bodily ailment."

Recently there have been a few missionary hospitals established in the Holy Land, but they are few and far between. Baedeker mentions them in giving details of the localities where they exist. Rev. William A. Knight, who has visited Palestine a number of times, in a recent letter says that he visited some in 1910, but adds, "I saw but slight ways and means for the improvement of general health conditions, — none for the most part." The conditions may have changed somewhat during the war. Some of the hospitals will doubtless have been given up, and the most which will now exist will probably be the military hospitals. But with the abolition of Turkish dominion in Palestine, if it becomes an actual fact after the war, we will see a great improvement in this direction as in all others.

It was at the gate of the temple that this beggar had his seat. The kindest and most sympathetic people in the world are praying people. Persons who obey the first table of the law are most likely to obey the second. Nine tenths of all the money raised for benevolent purposes, and for the support of our charitable institutions, comes from the pockets of those who go "up to the temple at the hour of prayer." Giving is an act of worship, one way of expressing love and devotion to God.

III. FAITH AND THE HELPING HAND, vs. 3-10.

The Lame Man, seeing Peter and John, asked for a gift.

Peter and John, fastening their eyes upon him, said, LOOK ON US.

The Lame Man gave heed unto them, expecting to receive money.

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none. He was not a rich man, and whatever money he and John might have brought from their home to Jerusalem had probably been given to the Christians who were away from home and in need. But such as I have. And what he had was worth so much more than any money he could have given the beggar!

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST RISE UP AND WALK.

The Lame Man's faith was so great that when Peter took him by the right hand in order to help him up, and to give him confidence, he was immediately cured of his infirmity.

And he, leaping up, stood. His act shows his faith. He obeyed Peter's command at once, encouraged by Peter's hand, and as he obeyed the healing came. He first stood, holding Peter's hand for support, and then walked, an act he had never done before. "The miracle did more than give strength. For the art of walking must needs be learned." Even one who has walked for years is obliged to learn over again if he is incapacitated for walking for any length of time.

The Lame Man showed his faith in still another way. He gave the credit to God, rather than to the instruments of God's working. And he began his new life by worship. For he entered with them, Peter and John, into the temple, walking, and leaping, to test and enjoy the new use of his limbs, and praising God for His mercy to him.

10. And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

The Wonderful Cure was plain to those entering into the temple, for all could see him, and his form was so familiar to them that they knew that it was the same man who had sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement.

The Restored Man's Faith. We may be sure that this lame beggar was, even before his cure, a man of faith, a believer in God, a good man according to his lights and abilities. The response of his faith was too immediate for us to readily believe that it was a new, unpractised power. He could not have expected to be cured, but he held his faith in God in the midst of his infirmities.

"There is a marginal reading in the Revised Version which always seems to me to be full of wealthy significance: 'Faith is the giving substance to things hoped for.' Faith's hopes become substantial homes. Its castles in the air become fortified dwellings. Faith is also 'the test of things not seen.' By a test faith acquires a proof. By an experiment faith obtains an experience. . . . Faith first of all seeks an experience, and only in the second place an explanation. 'Faith in the last analysis is an act of the will and not of the intellect; it is the surrender of the man at the very center of his personal life to the love and care of God.'

"Now, faith cannot work without conceptions, without ideals, without hopes. Hopes are the raw material which faith converts into finished webs and garments. When faith ventures, it ventures on a hope, on some hypothesis, on an assumption, if you will, on a dream! That is to say, faith must first have visions." — *From Rev. J. H. Jowett, D.D.*

The Cripple

"Dear God, since every shining door of life
Was ever closed 'gainst my infirmity,
I know one portal standeth wide for me,
When I have passed the margins of Earth's strife.

"And this I pray, that tho' I languish here,
Tortured in flesh, and mocked of mine own soul,
That there, my spirit and my body whole,
I shall find work, and, finding, hold it dear.

"Oh, give me, as Life's recompense, to bring
My new-found strength within Thy vineyard fair.
I have so longed for work. God, let me bear
Its stress and strain, my offering to my King!" — *Margaret Cable Brewster.*

"Faith is simply the soul's discovery of God, and we cannot have it unless God gives it. It has nothing in common with credulity; it is an assurance of God's presence and of our communion with him. We ought to pray for it (if we are without it), and when God bestows it seek for more. Faith in this, the true sense, is never found apart from some of the notes of real nobleness. Those whose life belies their professed belief are confounding the spiritual quality called faith with adherence to a number of propositions about God." — *Reginald J. Campbell.*

Faith to-day brings spiritual healing, whether or not we can trace its effects in cures like that of the lame man in this lesson. And in many cases this cure of the spirit is as great a miracle as any performed upon the physical bodies of men.

Illustration. Two men were once talking together. One said he did not believe in miracles. The other replied, "If a miracle is a change due to supernatural power, I can show you a miracle."

They went to a hall, where after a hymn and a prayer a big man with a voice of thunder poured forth for half an hour a perfect torrent of appeal to a roomful of lost men and women. He begged, urged, commanded them to come to God.

When he sat down, a score of men and women went forward, and the big man knelt and prayed for them in a voice so tender that the disbeliever in miracles found his face wet with tears.

"Well," said the other, as they went out, "you have seen your miracle."

"I grant I have seen an interesting sight and heard a good temperance talk, but where is the miracle?"

"Nine months ago that man you heard was a professional gambler and thief. He has been in state prison six different times. He has spent a fortune in drink and vice. To-day he is engaged in an honest trade. He has abandoned all his old habits, and every hour he can spare he labors to redeem lost men and women. He is a devout, prayerful man. I say he is a modern miracle, as great as any that Jesus Christ

11. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12. And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

14. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15. And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

16. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

ever performed. Could anything except miraculous power make that man what he is to-night?"

"You are right. I shall never disbelieve in miracles again." — *From the Youth's Companion.*

IV. **PETER'S APPLICATION OF THE MIRACLE**, vs. 11-26. As the lame man, holding Peter and John, went with them through the Gate Beautiful, down the steps and across the court into Solomon's Porch, directly opposite, **the people ran together unto them there, greatly wondering.**

And when Peter saw the crowd of people, and their wonder, he answered their evident questions and perplexities, first, by a direct denial that the healing of the lame man was due to either the power or the holiness of the apostles themselves.

He declared to them that it was the work of the crucified and ascended Messiah, the Son of God, working through the human agency of the Apostles.

But this Son of God, the Holy One and the Just, the people had rejected; they had chosen Barabbas the robber instead of Jesus the Saviour, even when Pilate wished to set Him free.

Yet what they had done had been through ignorance, and through the will and foreknowledge of God. Therefore there was hope for them still if they would only repent . . . and be converted, that so their sins might be blotted out, wholly forgiven. They were still the children of God's covenant through the keeping of which all the kindreds of the earth should be blessed.

Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

There must have been many in that crowd who were filled with hope and faith and longed for the better treasures which Jesus had in store for them. Doubtless many from these were among the thousands who in a few years joined the new Christian Church, becoming openly the followers of the Jesus who had died that they might be saved; who was raised from the dead that he might be the ever-living Saviour, not only in heaven, but always with his disciples as their constant helper and Saviour.

V. **HELPING MEN TO HELP THEMSELVES.** Peter and John gave the lame man two things, each of which was worth far more than the silver and gold he had looked for from them. (1) They gave him the power to earn his own living, instead of being dependent upon the charity of others. (2) They bestowed a far greater gift than this — they brought him to the Lord Jesus, into the Christian life. Jesus in all his healings gave the higher blessing with the lower. He always did more than heal the body. That was the lesser part of the cure. He asked the suffering one for faith; and did all he could to kindle faith within him. Thus he cured the soul, inspired it with love, and a desire to follow Jesus, and live the better life.

Peter's Method of Helping this lame man, giving him the power to support himself, is now generally accepted as the best and most effective method of bestowing charity, except in emergencies, before money can be earned. The best gifts to the poor, or to any one, are not the exact things they want, but the power to obtain

them ; not merely a cup of water, but an overflowing fountain ; not a basket of fruit, but a fruit tree ; not mere money, but the power and opportunity to earn a living ; not a definite amount of truth, but the means of searching for truth. Peter and John helped the lame man to help himself, both physically and spiritually. He was a new man. He had entered the Land of Beginning Again.

"I wish that there were some wonderful place
Called the Land of Beginning Again,
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches
And all our poor selfish grief
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door,
And never put on again."

The Lame Man had a blessed opportunity to build up a Christian character by studying the character of Jesus and what he had done ; and in striving to carry on His work so far as it lay in his power to do so.

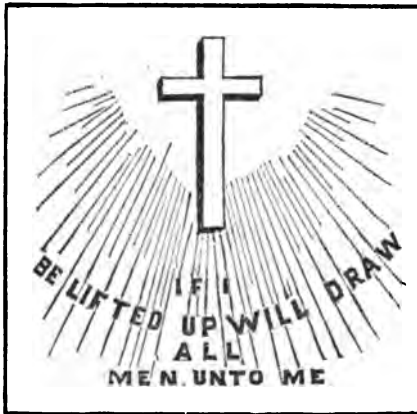
"God gives each man one life, like a lamp, then gives
That lamp due measure of oil. Lamp lighted —
Hold high, wave wide
Its comfort for others to share." — *Browning.*

How Can Christians Best Help Others to Help Themselves? Socialism teaches that a change of circumstances will effect a change of character. Christianity teaches, and the experience of thousands seems to prove and illustrate the teaching, that a change of character will effect a change of circumstances.

Dr. Cabot of Boston, in a lecture reported in *The Child in the City*, says that disaster and failure come from the attempt to separate the body from the soul in social work. The sick person always needs spiritual help. "The physical pain provided with almost miraculous swiftness the spiritual meeting-ground for the

person who needs help, and the person who has help to give." "And I believe," he says, "that we are worse than foolish — we are insane, if we do not call to our aid the greatest of all powers, the power of religion."

"*The World's Need of Christ.* If Christ were King in the world to-day, there would not be a hungry mouth anywhere under the sun, nor one little crying child. Men need Christ to-day not for their bodies' sake only. The moral needs of the world are as deep now as they were when Christ came, and they are everywhere. . . . We protest against any denial of Christ to the world. It has a title in him equal to any title that we have. The world calls for him. . . . Who but Jesus Christ can ever bind this torn and discordant world together ? . . . There is only one way in which the world ever can be united into one : 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,' said Jesus



"If I Be Lifted Up."

Christ, 'will draw all men unto me.' In the one Head of all humanity, the one Shepherd of the whole flock of every race and every people and every tongue — only there can any hope of human unity ever be found." — *From a Sermonic Address by Rev. Robert E. Speer.*

"*War with the Slums.* The influence of the Church of Christ is in conflict with the city slums. . . . In the kingdom of God on earth there will be no slums because a true Christian society would not permit such conditions to exist. . . . Tenement house reform should go hand in hand with city mission work. One helps to create a healthful environment, the other creates right-minded people to live in the environment. Every church should promote by every means in its power the making of good clean homes, and good health laws for all citizens. Such action is a religious duty. . . . The cross in the city slum does not mean simply giving the gospel message, but also practical and needed, loving, brotherly assistance." — *From Rev. Parris T. Farwell.*

We are told that it seems to be a probability that one of the lasting results of this great war to the people in London will be the doing away with at least the worst part of its great slums. The people of the slums are learning how to live; the men are drafted into the army, and trained in the care of the body; the women have all the work they can do and the crushing poverty has lifted its burden from hundreds of them. And soldiers and other workers alike are learning spiritual lessons. Christian workers in England tell us that these soldiers when they return home, as very many will, will not be willing to go back to the old life, with its hardships, hunger, squalor, and criminality. They have been taught to care for themselves, body and spirit; they have learned to work, have got into the habit of working; and there will be more work in proportion to the population for many years. The slums are going; healthful dwellings, industrious people, and shortage of criminals seem likely to take their place.

A Concrete Example. There are many men and women who are trying in their own way, to the utmost of their power, to aid the unfortunate with means to help themselves; to give them, not charity, but justice and a fair share in the good things of life.

An outstanding example, because of the fact that the man is well and almost universally known, is that of Mr. Henry Ford, the maker of the Ford automobile, who "is trying the experiment (and successfully) of reforming prisoners by kindness and work. One man who had been years in prison came to the works, told his story, and got a job. He worked for six weeks and his work was not very satisfactory. One morning he received a letter from the manager asking him to brace up and show what good stuff was in him. Next day he came to the office accompanied by his wife. He said, 'That's the first decent thing that was ever said to me. I'm going to stick and work for you if I work my hands off.' He prospered, and is now paying for a home of his own."

— *E. Hovey.*

Nor is this the sole example of Mr. Ford's work. It is merely an illustration of the method by which people there are helped to help themselves.

Only through creating new desires in the hearts of men will they in fact rise above their present condition. Give a drunkard of the slums control of unlimited money, and he will only drink himself to death the sooner. Give the bestial man unlimited opportunities, and he will only turn them to pander to his vices. But bring out such manly qualities as a man has, and he will turn an unfavorable environment into a garden of the Lord, whose fragrance sweetens the lives of all around him, whether they understand it, and seek it, or no.

LESSON III (16). — January 18.

THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN. — Acts 4:1-31.

PRINT Acts 4:8-21.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

— 1 COR. 16:13.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 124.

Additional Material for Teachers: Matt. 5:10-12; Acts 5:12-42; 20:22-24; 2 Tim. 4:6-8, 16-18; Heb. 11:32, 38.

Primary Topic: THE STORY OF TWO BRAVE MEN.

Lesson Material: Acts 4:1-22.

Memory Verse: Be strong and of good courage. Josh. 1:9.

Junior Topic: PETER AND JOHN STANDING UP FOR JESUS.

Lesson Material: Acts 4:1-22.

Memory Verses: Acts 4:19, 20.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: COURAGE TO DO THE RIGHT.

Additional Material: Acts 5:17-42.

Topic for Young People and Adults: THE NEED AND SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

Additional Material: Same as for Teachers.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

This lesson lends itself to stories of heroism and the younger grades will be especially interested in the story of the lesson, the source of the Apostles' bravery, and how Jesus is ever ready to help His children to be brave. Because of the

war, many tales of noteworthy heroism are obtainable, but the teacher should not so confine himself to this class of illustration that the class will think that war brings out the highest form of courage. There are many hero stories of missionaries in all periods of the Christian Church and even in the civil and political life of every nation.

In the Intermediate and Senior grades discuss the courage needed to-day, both in school and in business, if one is determined to do the right. Show by illustrations from the common life—from the life of a boy, if possible—that it takes courage to live as well as to die; that to be pure, true, and honest in everyday life—to “play the game” at cost to one’s self—requires a courage equal to that needed in the front-line trenches.

Young People and Adults, both should analyze Christian courage and see how it has its deepest roots in the life and teachings of Jesus; how it affects the highest and broadest aims of mankind; and search out how and where Christian courage will solve the problems of our country.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time.—The same afternoon as the last lesson, and the following morning.

Place.—Arrested in Solomon’s Porch; imprisoned somewhere in Jerusalem; tried in the hall of the Sanhedrin, adjoining the temple.

THE TEACHER’S LIBRARY.

On the lesson text, any *Commentary* on Acts, as named in previous lessons.

On the lessons to be drawn, Mrs. Ozora Davis’ *Hero Tales*. Plato’s story of Socrates’ trial at Athens. Luther’s

experience as given in Carlyle’s *Heroes and Hero Worship*; Lowell’s *Poems*, “The Present Crisis.”

Tales of missionary heroism and courage, such as Dr. Paton’s life, the story of the Hawaiian Islands, and of the Huguenots in France. Dr. James L. Barton’s *The Missionary and His Critics*. *Blue Sky*, the story of Mrs. Caswell’s work among the Indians.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

What was the real reason for the arrest of Peter and John?
Why were the Sadducees especially opposed to Peter’s teaching?
The sources of the boldness of Peter and John.
Being with Jesus, as a means of courage.
For what did the disciples pray?
The result of the boldness of the disciples.
What sort of courage is truly the greatest?
Is there any difference between Christian courage and that of the world?
Is boldness always the sign of real courage?

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Boldness of Peter and John.

- I. THE CONNECTION.
- II. THE OPPOSITION OF THE RULERS, vs. 1-4.
- III. PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT, vs. 5-7.
- IV. PETER’S DEFENCE, vs. 8-12.
- V. THE SENTENCE OF THE COURT, vs. 13-18.
- VI. THE ANSWER OF PETER AND JOHN, vs. 19-22.
- VII. COURAGE TO DO THE RIGHT.
- VIII. THE NEED AND SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN COURAGE.
- IX. THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT, vs. 23-31.

I. THE CONNECTION. The story of this lesson opens with Peter preaching in Solomon’s Porch, where we left him in our last lesson. The well-known beggar at the Beautiful Gate had been cured; the crowd, filled with amazement, had rushed to Solomon’s Porch, where they surrounded the three concerned in the miracle, who had gone there with them.

II. THE OPPOSITION OF THE RULERS, vs. 1-4. Before the crowd in Solomon’s Porch stand two unlearned men, but men trained by Jesus and filled with the Holy Ghost. Peter is speaking. John stands by him, to encourage and indorse him. Peter has taken for his text the man by his side, beaming with joy and gratitude. He proclaims that Jesus of Nazareth was the expected Messiah of the Jews; charges the people, and especially the rulers, with the crime of murdering Jesus; and urges them to repent and be saved.

1. **And as they spake**, the officials of the temple, whose services had doubtless been interfered with by the withdrawal of the crowds into another part of the temple, and who resented any lessening of their influence, **came upon them**. The captain of the temple was the captain of the guard of Levites and others whose duty was to protect the temple and prevent disorder and any interruption of the services. He was under the direction of the priests.

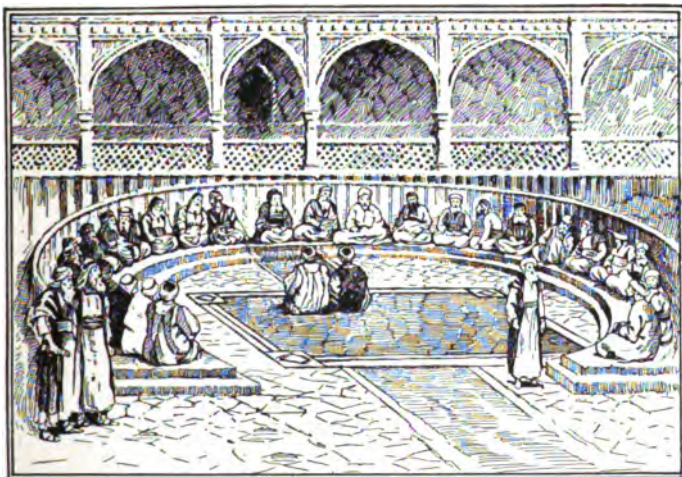
2. These were sore troubled (Am. R.), "thoroughly worked up," partly because the apostles had interfered with the priest's services; but no doubt largely because what Peter was preaching, — that Jesus had been raised from the dead and was actually alive, the living Son of God, — was a flat contradiction of the religious opinions of the Sadducees, who were a very influential sect among the Jews, and who did not believe in the future life, nor in the resurrection, nor in any unseen spiritual beings.

3. And they laid hands on them. Arrested them. Put them in hold, *i.e.* in prison. The word means "ward," under guard, and the place of custody. It was not a punishment, but a means of having them on hand for their trial. The man they had cured was possibly with them (v. 14). Unto the next day. Because it was too late to assemble the Sanhedrin, who could not lawfully sit except by daylight. Eventide. Near six o'clock, for the preaching and other events must have taken some time since the healing of the lame man, about three o'clock P.M.

The two apostles were doubtless praying and praising God as Paul and Silas later in the prison at Philippi (Acts 16:25). Their hearts were being filled with the Spirit, with wisdom, courage, faith, and power.

4. Howbeit. In spite of the opposition of the rulers the deeds and teachings of the apostles had their due effect. And the number of men grew to be 5000, besides the women. Persecution, instead of destroying the new religion, caused it to grow. It called wider attention to its claims and caused discussion, which is always favorable to the truth.

III. PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT, vs. 8-12. The next morning the members of the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of the Jews, gathered



Hall of the Sanhedrin in Session.
Adjoining the west wall of the Temple.

in their hall in Jerusalem to decide what could be done under the circumstances. They were suddenly summoned, some from their country residences, to come in haste to the city. There were 71 members of the court. "It included beyond all doubt the most prominent representatives of the priesthood, belonging chiefly, if not entirely, to the Sadducean party." — *Exp. Grk. Test.* And elders, leading men who were neither priests nor scribes, who were professional lawyers, teachers, and interpreters of the Jewish law.

6. And Annas, the ex-high priest, the father of Caiaphas the real high priest; but Annas dominated the office.

"The Sanhedrin sat in a semi-circle; the president being in the middle of the arc; the accused standing in the center." — *Plumptre*. Thus all could see and hear.

8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9. If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

7. When all was ready they brought out from the prison Peter and John, and with them came the impotent man who had been healed, for a witness (v. 14). **And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name.** Power is force, name is authority. By what magical power did you do this, and what right had you to use such power? They wanted to convict Peter and John of sorcery, of having worked a miracle, not in the name of God, but of a crucified malefactor. "They hoped to bring the apostles under the awful death sentence pronounced in the law which especially provides for the case when the sign or the wonder comes to pass." — *Schaff*. See Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26; Deut. 13.



High Priest.

The *Mitre*, or turban, was, at least in later times, surmounted by a triple crown of gold. The *Breastplate* was set with twelve precious stones, bearing the names of the twelve tribes. The *Ephod*, to which the breastplate was fastened, was a small garment of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet. The *Robe of the Ephod* was much longer than the ephod, and entirely of blue, with a fringe of alternate pomegranates and golden bells.

Here was just the audience the apostles wanted. It enabled them to gain a hearing before the rulers and chief men of the nation, whom otherwise it would have been almost impossible to reach.

IV. **PETER'S DEFENCE**, vs. 8-12. Then Peter (John was just as brave, but Peter was the natural orator), filled with the Holy Ghost in fulfilment of Christ's promise (Matt. 10:19, 20). Thus Peter was given courage to speak the truth, and guided to the choice of the right things to say, and the best way of saying them. This was his first experience in speaking before this august assembly, and he, an unlearned fisherman, may well have quailed before a tribunal with such power over his fortunes, even while he rejoiced at the opportunity of preaching the gospel to them.

Ye rulers of the people. "He addresses them with the respect due their office, though he does not hesitate to charge upon them the death of the Messiah. Note Peter's direction in 1 Pet. 2:17, 'Honor all men.'" — *Abbott*.

9. If we this day be examined, etc. Ironical surprise runs through the reply, which may be paraphrased thus: "If we really are arraigned, which seems hardly credible, on account of the good deed done to this poor man (pointing to the healed cripple), know all of you," etc.

10. **By (in) the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth** (quoting the title nailed on the cross), **whom ye crucified.** "The boldness of the declaration was startling. He presses home the fact that, though Pilate had given the formal sentence, it was they who had crucified their king." — *Plumpre*. Whom God raised from the dead. It was a fact beyond question.

11. **This is the stone set at nought of you builders.** The reference is to Ps. 118:22. Christ applies the same prophecy to himself in Matt. 21:42. To the unuttered objection of the Sanhedrin that this Jesus had already been condemned as an impostor, Peter replied, You who were set to build up God's spiritual temple have rejected and tried to destroy the very foundation stone, without which it could not be builded. But in spite of your efforts, that rejected stone has become the head of the corner.

12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16. Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*.

17. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all *men* glorified God for that which was done.

12. **Neither is there salvation in any other.** Peter further charged the members of the Sanhedrin with having done all they could to ruin their own country and the hope of the Jews, for their only hope of salvation was Jesus Christ, the ever-living Saviour. There was no other power under heaven that could have saved the Jewish nation from the destruction which came upon them thirty-five or forty years later, when temple and city were destroyed by the Romans, and the way was opened for the Christian religion to spread through the world.

None other name. "Name" here stands for Jesus Christ himself, and all there is in him of wisdom, power, love, divineness; just as a man's name to a note stands for all a man is and has, — his property, his character, his ability, his integrity.

V. THE SENTENCE OF THE COURT, vs. 13-18. When Peter had finished his defence the members of the court marvelled how such men could speak with such power and freedom before a court of the noblest and most learned and powerful officials of the Jews. **And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.** This does not mean that the members of the Sanhedrin had just become aware that Peter and John were disciples of Jesus, for they had seen them with Jesus at different times in the temple. But they recognized by the apostles' bearing, and boldness, and doctrine, and work, that they had been under the training, teaching, and influence of Jesus.

Being with Jesus. What is it to be with Jesus? (1) To be with him in our thoughts, — communion of spirit; (2) in our hearts, — loving and trusting him; (3) in our motives, — doing all for his sake; (4) in our actions, — working with and for him; (5) in person, — having the real abiding presence of Christ according to his promise.

14. **The man which was healed** was in the court as a witness and proof of the miracle wrought. It was a demonstrated fact, and **they could say nothing against it.**

The three were sent out of the council hall while the Court conferred together as to what course they should take.

The result was that when the three were recalled they were commanded **not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.**

VI. THE ANSWER OF PETER AND JOHN, vs. 19-22. But Peter and John utterly refused to obey. **Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.** For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

And the rulers finding nothing how they might punish them, let the apostles go after further threatening them.

Hugh Latimer's Sermon. One of the bravest sermons ever preached was one that Latimer preached before Henry VIII. He had offended the king by a very plain-spoken sermon, and was commanded to make a recantation the following Sunday. He began as if in a soliloquy, "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know to whom thou art this day to speak? to the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, that can take away thy life, if thou offend; therefore take heed how thou speak a word that may displease." Then, changing his tone, he continued, "Hugh, Hugh, dost thou know from whence thou comest, upon whose message thou art sent, and who it is that is present with thee, and beholdeth all thy ways? even the great and mighty God, who is able to cast both body and soul into hell forever; therefore be sure that thy message is delivered faithfully." He then proceeded fearlessly to reprove the king's conduct even more plainly than before.

VII. COURAGE TO DO THE RIGHT. "The supreme inquiry for each of us when summoned to a new work is not whether we possess courage or qualifications for it, but whether we have been called to it of God; and when that is so there is no further cause of anxiety."—*Rev. F. B. Meyer.*

Heroism and Duty. "'Never mind making me out a hero. I did my duty—that's all. It's all in the day's work.' This was said by a life-saver who, at the risk of his own life, saved three children and their nurse from drowning at a beach. "It was his duty to do it, and he did it. There was nothing heroic about it in his mind.

"But history has given us a different estimate of heroism. All heroism that humanity has cared enough about to make record of and remember has been nothing more or less than duty.

"Every man has his particular part to play in this world's advancement. The men who have played their parts with exceptional completeness are the world's heroes. To do one's duty is to do enough to merit the stamp of greatness. Nobody ever got that stamp justly by any other method.

"Few of us really do our duty. When some man does do his duty he becomes conspicuous. He is an exceptional man because he 'did his duty—that's all.' That is precisely the reason he ought to be held up as a model. The man who does his duty, and does it as a matter of course, is the highest example of true manhood. From such we have to learn the greatest lesson of life."—*Christian Herald.*

The Torch of Life. "The setting of this poem by an English poet is not entirely familiar to American boys, but its spirit appeals to boys the world around, and not only to boys but to all those who have kept alive in their hearts the spirit of youth."

"There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night:
Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote:
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

"The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke:
The galling's jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honor a name;
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

"This is the word that, year by year,
While in her place the school is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And, falling, fling to the host behind:
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'"—*Henry Newbolt.*

And at the Centennial Meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, October, 1910, this poem, with two more verses by another hand, was read as an incentive to fuller and harder work in the carrying out of Christ's last commission to all his followers on earth. These are the new verses, applying Newbolt's poem to the Christian life and work.

"The game of the Christ is on to-day
Here at home and far away.
Though the boards are in debt and the workers worn,
A thought of defeat those workers scorn.
It's the laymen's and young people's hour to-night,
The appeal comes straight to you, honor bright,
Hear Captain Christ call, taking your name—
'Play up! play up! and win my game!'

"The Church this word must sound most clear,
While in worship her sons are met,
Till every Christian man shall hear,
And none that hear it dare forget.
Each Christian this with a joyful mind
Should bear through life like a torch aflame,
And working and giving, fling behind:
'Play up! play up! and play Christ's game!'"

Cheer Him! Many a man who has failed would have stood the test if he had only had a little encouragement from his friends. An example from a fireman's life is directly in point.

"In one of our large cities a fire broke out in a lofty dwelling. It was near midnight, and the flames had made headway before they were discovered. The fire companies rallied; the inmates escaped in affright; and the firemen worked with a will to subdue the flames. . . . But a piercing cry thrilled all hearts, as they learned that there was one person yet unsaved within the building.

"In a moment a ladder was swung through the flames, and planted against the heated walls, and a brave fireman rushed up its rounds to the rescue. Overcome by the smoke, and perhaps daunted by the hissing flames before him, he halted and seemed to hesitate. It was an awful scene. A life hung in the balance, and each moment was an age.

" 'Cheer him!' shouted a voice from the crowd; and a wild 'Hurrah!' burst like a tempest from the beholding multitude. That cheer did the work. . . .

"Friend, brother, when you see a brave soul battling with temptation, struggling under the cross, rushing forward to rescue dying men, and yet faltering in an hour of weakness, or a moment of peril, then 'cheer him!'"

VIII. THE NEED AND SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN COURAGE. "It takes more courage and a great deal more intelligence to undertake to live the Christian life as a right-minded and humane employer of labor on a large scale, as a man charged with the responsibility of directing the intricate affairs of a great department store in a just way, as a man who gets into the thick of it in the fight for clean politics and for a better administration of public affairs, as a man who goes bravely down where he feels the hot, bad breath of vice and crime and accepts his share of the common responsibility for righting those wrongs." — *Dr. Charles R. Brown.*

The True Test of a Man. "A man is not tested when he stands the observed of all observers, nor when he does some conspicuously great deed. The true test is his bearing on unimportant occasions and in doing trivial duties. 'The great crises arrive in the midst of ordinary, commonplace things, to which as men look back they are ashamed the crises could have come in such an hour and in such a place.'" — *From The Continent.*

"Tis no true sign of Hero blood
When forced our lives to give;
We're pledged not by the way we die,
But by the way we live.
'Tis not when Death says: 'Stand! Thou shalt!'
That Hero blood is shown;
But while we have the power to choose,
And choose the good alone." — *Ardella Z. Stewart.*

"To every man there openeth
A Way, and Ways, and a Way,
And the High Soul climbs the High way
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A High Way and a Low,
And every man decideth
The Way his soul shall go." — *John Ozenham.*

The Secret of Courage. "Walking by sight is just this: 'I believe in myself'; whereas walking by faith is 'I believe in God.' If I walk by sight I walk by myself; if I walk by faith then there are two of us, and the second one — ah, how great, how glorious, how mighty he is — the great All in all — God all-sufficient! Sight goes a warfare at its own charges, and becomes a bankrupt, and is defeated. Faith goes a warfare at the charges of the King's Exchequer, and there is no fear that the King's bank shall ever be broken." — *C. H. Spurgeon.*

Another secret is to do one's duty of the moment, forgetting or ignoring one's feelings about it. "A pupil in one of the public schools was given the task of writing a short story as an English exercise. After leading her heroine through various hair-raising adventures, she ended as follows:

"By this time she was too frightened to go to bed, which she did."

"Which she did" is good! No finer illustration of moral courage can be imagined than the doing of the necessary thing — the manifest duty of the moment — regardless of one's state of mind toward it." — *Anna Burnham Bryant, in The Pilgrim Magazine.*

If we face the danger we shall feel less fear. Had Peter and John been careful to do their preaching behind locked doors, where the rulers could not hear them, — if they had tried to escape when the officers came upon them, — there would have been no boldness in their demeanor for the rulers to wonder at. And their work, and its success, would have suffered, if it had not been negligible. There is a great difference in one's feelings when facing danger and when running away from it.

Illustration. A modest young giant of an itinerant Methodist minister in the West related his experience in meeting, unarmed, two hungry mountain lions.

"I was terribly frightened. I ran. I ran very fast. Did you ever feel the hair rise prickling with terror all over your head? I did then. In an agony of terror it came to me that I must face them or die, and without reasoning I obeyed the impulse, and suddenly wheeled about. The lions stopped too. With no weapon save my heavy shoes — I had kicked football in my college days — I know now, of course, that I hadn't a ghost of a chance with the beasts.

"Yet I was not afraid. That was the most interesting part of all — my feelings. I remember them perfectly. When I was running I was afraid — horribly, miserably afraid. But as I faced the lions every particle of fear left me, and I flashed into an exalted state of mind and body that was, I think, courage in the highest degree. I did not dread the moment of conflict. I never in my life felt so big and so alive — so entirely confident. Moreover I had a wonderful spiritual quickening — a kind of clearing away of sense barriers between me and God. My soul flashed out to him in intimate contact. I was exultingly sure that he was with me, and that he would help me.

"The lions drew near me, ready for the spring. Then suddenly, a freight train came along with a tremendous whistle, and headlights glaring full into the faces of the beasts. They bounded up the sides of the cliff, screeching at every jump. I never heard such blood-curdling yells.

"Then my fear all came back. My hair came up again, prickling all over my head, and again I turned and ran, horribly afraid that the big cats would be waiting for me over the bluff." — *Told by the one who experienced it to Mrs. Lucy Ryder Meyer. From The Outlook.*



Peter and John.

Dittler.

IX. THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT, vs. 23-31.

When Peter and John were let go, they went to their own company at some general meeting place for all the Christians, and reported all that had taken place. And the band of Christians lifted up their voice to God with one accord in sacred song, the earliest recorded Christian hymn, an adaptation of Ps. 2:1, 2, 4.

"Why did the heathen rage,
And the people imagine vain things?
The kings of the earth stood up,
And the rulers were gathered together
Against the Lord and against his Christ."

Their Prayer, vs. 29, 30. Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. Signs of God's presence, power, and goodness. Wonders, to call the attention of the people to Jesus and to prove his divine Messiahship.

It is very noteworthy that they asked nothing for themselves. They did not pray for escape from prisons or scourging or trials, but only for the success of their work. Compare Paul's experience as recorded in 2 Tim. 4:6-8:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day:

and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Peter and John tower up to heroic height. Suffering for Christ strikes out sweeter music in more heavenly strains than mere peace can awaken.

The Answer was clearly made known. The Holy Spirit came upon them as at Pentecost. They spake the word of God with boldness. There was a new unity,

a new impulse of generosity, new grace, new power, greater numbers added to the church.

"Christian! dost thou see them
On the holy ground?
How the powers of darkness
Rage thy steps around?
Christian, up and smite them!
Counting gain but loss;
In the strength that cometh
By the Holy Cross.

"Christian! dost thou feel them,
How they work within.
Striving, tempting, luring,
Goading into sin?
Christian, never tremble;
Never be downcast;
Gird thee for the battle,
Watch and pray and fast.

"Well I know thy trouble,
O My servant true;
Thou art very weary,
I was weary too;
But that toil shall make thee
Some day all Mine own,
And the end of sorrow
Shall be near My throne."

LESSON IV (17). — January 25.

PETER STANDS UP FOR TRUTH AND HONESTY. —

Acts 5:1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah;
But they that deal truly are His delight.* — PROV. 12:22.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 15.

Additional Material for Teachers: Ex. 20:16; Prov. 11:1; Matt. 6:2-4;
Gal. 6:7, 8; Eph. 4:15, 25, 30; Rev. 22:15.

Primary Topic: TELLING THE TRUTH.

Lesson Material: 1 Sam. 3:10-18.

Memory Verse: Speak ye truth each one with his neighbor. Eph. 4:25.

Junior Topic: TWO DECEIVERS AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM.

Lesson Material: Acts 5:1-11.

Memory Verse: Eph. 4:25.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: THE FOLLY AND SINFULNESS OF LYING.

Additional Material: Ex. 20:16; Prov. 6:16-19; 12:22; Eph. 4:25;
Rev. 22:15.

Topic for Young People and Adults: MODERN FORMS OF HYPOCRISY.

Additional Material: Matt. 6:1-18; 23:1-36; Gal. 6:7, 8.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

This lesson should be made an extremely practical one. Teach all grades the value of truth-telling, and the sin of deceit. Teach that there is no such thing as a "white lie." Emphasize the trust we place in the one whose word can be absolutely relied on.

The Junior grade can add to this the fate of the liar in this world and the next; our estimate of the one whose word cannot be trusted.

The Intermediate and Senior grades can also make a study of what the Bible says about lying, and the folly of trying to live a deceitful life.

The Young People and Adults will find material for an interesting and profitable study in the application of the

question to our daily life, — "society lies"; business frauds; hypocritic diplomacy; shams of all kinds.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Probably somewhere between A.D. 30 and 34. There is no hint of the exact date.

Place. — Jerusalem, at the usual place of assembly for the Christian community.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Dante's *Paradiso*. Also in his *Inferno* he describes hypocrites in the eighth circle and fifth pit. George Eliot's *Romola*, the chapter on "Tito's Dilemma." Rogers in his bright *Greyson*

Letters has chapters on "The Best Punishments of Hypocrisy," on Lying, and on Compulsory Virtue. William Secker in his *Nonesuch Professor*, on "Hypocrisy." Whately's *Annotations of Bacon's Essays* on "Dissimulation." Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan."

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The picture of the early Church in Acts 4:33-37 as compared with that in Acts 2:42-47.
The character of Barnabas.
The inducements to Ananias' action.
Was Peter in any way the cause of the death of Ananias and Sapphira?
What is the true definition of a lie?
Is it ever right to tell a lie?
"Polite lies" and "society lies."
Training children to tell the truth; the difference between lying and "imagination."
Hypocrisy.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

All *Commentaries* on Acts. Professor Ramsay's *Pictures of the Apostolic Church*. "Barnabas" in Hastings' *Bible Diction-*

ary. Pierson's *Acts of the Holy Spirit* contains some remarkable facts like the judgment upon Ananias.

See Bunyan's *Capture of Mansoul*. No outward attacks could destroy the fortress of the soul unless there was a traitor within.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Death of Ananias, in Raphael's *Cartoons*.*

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Evil Results of Lying and Hypocrisy.

- I. THE CHURCH BOUNTIFUL, Acts 4: 32-37.
- II. ANANIAS, THE JUDAS OF THE EARLY CHURCH, vs. 1-4.
- III. THE FATE OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA, vs. 5-10.
- IV. THE EFFECT OF THE TRAGEDY, vs. 11-16.
- V. POINTS OF CONTACT WITH MODERN LIFE.

I. THE CHURCH BOUNTIFUL, Acts 4:32-37. In our last lesson we left the apostles and the other members of the early Church praying and praising God, filled with the Holy Ghost, and speaking the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

And although the multitude of those who believed had grown to be 5000 men, — and probably at least an equal number of women, — yet they were "of one heart and of one soul," not necessarily in every opinion, but in love, in affection, in purpose, in devotion. "And great grace was upon them all," both from God and man. Grace is originally that which gives pleasure and delight, as loveliness of form (the Greek Graces) or character (the Christian Graces); hence, the favor of men, which brings expressions of goodwill; but above all, the favor, the lovingkindness of God, which is the most perfect delight in the universe, bringing the favor of man, and the graces of character.

"Neither was there any among them that lacked" anything necessary for their support or their comfort, "for . . . possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices . . . and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." The need was greater than could be supplied by the income of the Christians. This made the Jerusalem church poor, but it was a noble poverty. If poor toward man, they were rich toward God, rich in Christian graces and helpfulness.

One of the most prominent and generous men in the young church at Jerusalem was Joses (= Joseph) surnamed Barnabas — Joseph Barnabas, so named because of his powers of exhortation, or of consolation. He was born in Cyprus, an island south of Asia Minor, where were famous copper mines. He was a Levite, one of the priestly tribe of Levi, who had no inheritance as a tribe, but could possess private property. Being the son of rich parents, he was sent to Jerusalem for his education, and there formed a friendship with Saul, who later became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:27; 11:25, 26; 13:1, 2).

Barnabas was among those who had land which he could sell, and he "sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet," to be given to those in need.

"A St. Louis clergyman is credited with recently putting an old truth in this striking way: 'If a man is thoroughly a Christian, the nerve that runs from his brain to his wallet will be just as much Christianized as the one that runs from his brain to his tongue.'"

1. BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2. And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

II. ANANIAS, THE JUDAS OF THE EARLY CHURCH, 5: 1-4. But, in striking contrast with Barnabas, just named, a certain man named Ananias. The name means "to whom Jehovah has been gracious," and is the Hebrew "Hananiah," the name of one of the three companions of Daniel (Dan. 1: 6; 3). The name here is no indication of his character, as is that of Barnabas. With Sapphira ("beautiful," or "a sapphire") his wife. Sold a possession. The word means property of any kind; in this case it was landed property.

2. And kept back part of the price. The Greek means to set apart for one's self wrongfully. And brought a certain part, representing it to be the whole, which is where the sin and deception came in. His wife also being privy to it. This statement proves that it was not a sudden overwhelming temptation, coming with overwhelming force upon one at unawares, but a deliberate plot agreed upon by the two. Laid it at the apostles' feet. Apparently at some public religious service, where they could be seen of men; there certainly were a number of others present (vs. 5, 6). Hypocrites blow the trumpet, or how could people know their virtues? Calvin says: "So it came to pass that he honored the feet of the apostles more than the eyes of God."

The crime was a complex one, woven of many strands. There were, no doubt, two causes for it. (1) There was a selfish, ambitious desire to be highly regarded by their fellow disciples, to be popular, as were some others. They saw how the generous Barnabas, for example, was loved and esteemed, and they envied him, and coveted the same honor. Yet they were not willing to really do the things which would naturally bring to them this love and honor.

(2) Doubtless they wished to seem as devoted and pious as the other disciples possessing property. To have property and not give a substantial part of it was a discredit to their piety. When every one else was vying with the others in gifts for the poor, it would be disreputable for this family to hold on to their possessions. It would be advertising their avarice. I once heard a man of property in a church complaining that others gave so liberally, for it compelled him also to give.

The strands which taken together made up this crime were: (1) *Deceit*; open, deliberate, wilful lying, both in word and in deed. (2) *Hypocrisy*; pretending to be a great deal better than they were, claiming virtues they knew they did not possess. (3) *Pride*, or vanity; an inordinate desire to appear well among their friends and neighbors. (4) *Avarice*; holding property at the expense of their virtue. (5) *Distrust of God*. (6) A kind of *sacrilege*; since the sin was especially against God, and, the indications are that it was done at, and as a part of, a religious service. It was in an assembly of the believers, perhaps a devotional meeting, and in a consecrated place. It was at a gathering which lasted at least three hours (v. 7); apparently a recognized meeting of the church (v. 11). "The object of the two, credit in the Church, could have been attained only by a public offering; and the lie is characterized as one told to God, not to man (v. 4)." — Abbott.

3. But Peter, the natural leader, said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart. Not simply, why, for what reason, but "how is it that" (Am. R.), "seeming to



From Calmet.
Hypocrites.

Ancient Actors Wearing Masks.

4. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

emphasize the fact that Ananias had it in his power to have prevented such a result." — *Exp. Grk. Test.*

This was the exact opposite of the case of the apostles. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, so that there was no room for Satan. Ananias was filled with Satan, so that there was no room for the Holy Spirit. The heart must be full of something; and it makes a world of difference with what it is filled; for the deeds and the destinies that flow from that fountain will depend on that which fills it.

To lie to the Holy Ghost. The lie was probably both an acted and a spoken one (v. 8). "They lied to the Holy Ghost, because the offering was made, not to the apostles, nor to the church, but to God, and the act was thus a direct falsehood addressed to Him." — *Abbott*. And it was in direct contravention of the presence, the works, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? No one compelled you to sell the property and give the money away. No one compelled you to give away the whole of the money you obtained from the sale of the property. But it was necessary that Ananias should act and speak the truth about the matter, and not give a part while representing it to be the whole. Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? What caused you to form such a plan? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. That is, the real force of the lie was against God more than man. So David said to God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." The sin against man was nothing in comparison to the sin against God.

"The sin of Ananias was much more than mere hypocrisy, much more than fraud, pride, or greed — hateful as these sins are — the power and presence of the Holy Spirit had been manifested in the Church, and Ananias had sinned not only against human brotherhood but against the divine light and leading which made the brotherhood possible." — *Exp. Grk. Test.*

Ananias' sin was a deadly blow against all that the Holy Spirit had done in founding the new community of Christians. It struck at the very life and hope of the world. Satan was trying to destroy the work of the Holy Spirit. The sin was unknown to man. It did not harm any man, except indirectly, because it was a sin against God. The injury was to His kingdom. It misrepresented God and His Church. It tended to make others think that there was no real piety.

III. THE FATE OF ANANIAS, vs. 5-10. Ananias . . . fell down, and gave up the ghost. Literally, "breathed out his life, his soul." In whatever way it came, by the shock of the discovery of his sin, or by a direct stroke from God, it was God's act, and in no sense the act of Peter and the apostles. Very probably they were as much astonished as any one. Had Peter done this act he would have been a murderer, subject to the laws of the land. But he had no hand in it whatever.

Why Such Severity of Punishment? 1. It was deserved, it was justice. "Exact justice is commonly more merciful in the long run than pity."

2. It was necessary in order to save the church from destruction from within.

3. It was necessary to counteract the effect of his conduct upon the world. It would tend to make men believe that there was nothing in religion, and men will not seek earnestly after that in which they do not believe. Therefore it was needful that the deed and its spirit should be publicly repudiated in the most unmistakable manner.

6. The burial of Ananias soon followed his death. The young men . . . carried him out beyond the walls of the city, "for burying places were always outside cities." "Only prophets and kings had their graves in the city." Burials always took place on the day of death if possible, both because of the danger of defilement, and because in that hot climate decay began very soon after death. (See Num. 19:11, etc.) "Even among the present inhabitants of Jerusalem, says Tobler, burial, as a general rule, is not deferred more than two or three hours." As Ananias was a man of prop-

7. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

11. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

erty, he probably had a private burial place, which would be either in a garden or a cave.

7. Apparently the meeting continued in the same room, for Sapphira, the wife of Ananias, having waited in vain for her husband's return with the news of the praise given him for his generosity, **came in** to the place of meeting, **not knowing what was done**, i.e. that her husband was dead. Peter asks her for the facts about the gift to the church, pointing to the pile of gold and silver. She had the chance to tell the truth which would have saved her. But, like her husband, she lied to God, to the Holy Spirit. And she fell down dead as her husband had done, and the same young men who had carried her husband to his burial carried her to the same tomb.

This Fate Came to Ananias and Sapphira through a Gradual Process of Deterioration.

"We are not worst at once; the course of evil
Begins so slowly, and from such slight source,
An infant's hand might stem the breach with clay;
But let the stream grow wider, and philosophy,
Age, and religion too, may strive in vain
To stem the headstrong current."

They had the "Religion of the Low Gear." Every Christian has within him something of the life of Christ; "but with some that life is so far within, so hidden under the rubbish, that the throb is felt but feebly. With others it thrills to the finger-tips — and beyond.

"In some ways, if a man can really settle down into it, this low-pressure, low-gear religion is much the more comfortable and popular, vastly more comfortable to the man himself. 'Above all, no zeal!' Why be 'righteous overmuch'? All this leaves the soul open to temptation, and is full of danger; so different from those who are striving after perfection, on fire for the service of God and man." — *Anon.*

Illustration. Senator Hoar in his *Autobiography* describes a sermon preached by Dr. James Walker, president of Harvard University when he was a student there, which made a deep impression on the students. "He described with terrific effect the thinking over in imagination of scenes of vice by the youth who seemed to the world outside to fall suddenly from virtue. He said there was no such thing as a sudden fall from virtue. The scene had been enacted in thought, and the man had become rotten before the time of the outward act. 'If we could look into his heart we should find him at his accursed rehearsals again.'"

But the fact of temptation is not an excuse for the sin. The sin was their own. It was their business to resist temptation and overcome it, and grow strong thereby. It was the battle that made victory possible. It was the Hill Difficulty by which alone they could climb to wider and more glorious visions. They stumbled over the very stairway to heaven.

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE TRAGEDY, vs. 11-16. (1) **And great fear came upon all the church.** Not fear of man, but great awe in the presence of God; great reverence for the Holy Spirit, great fear of sinning, great fear lest they might themselves be deceived. This led to careful living, to heart searchings, to watching and prayer. Their eyes were opened to spiritual realities. They realized the terrible nature of sin, the power and nearness of God's judgments against it. They lived in the presence of God's all-searching eye that penetrated into the recesses of the heart.

"There are things to fear which is right and noble, and not to fear is base." — *Aristotle.*

The value of this story lies not in the sin, but in the victory over the sin; not in the falling, but in the rising again. It is as true of churches as of individuals.

"St. Augustine! well hast thou said
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame."

But the rungs of the ladder are made, not of the vices, but of the victories over them.
(2) An increase of power by which many signs and wonders were wrought by the apostles.

(3) "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them." Those who were not really Christians were afraid to join a community where hypocrisy could be so severely punished, and where there were eyes that could see the secret motives of the heart. This sifting process was necessary, since there was great danger that many might profess to be Christians in order to obtain a support from the fund without working. It would have been easy to gather into the fold many hypocrites who cared only for the loaves and fishes, and thus to bring disaster upon the good name of the disciples.

(4) "But believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." The true believers were the more ready to join, since they saw that hypocrisy was banished.

Why is this story recorded in the Acts? (1) Because it is true, and necessary to a correct picture of the early Church. (2) It is a needed warning. (3) Because the record brings a ray of hope. For if the early Church had been pictured as a pure, angelic company, without spot or stain, we in later days would find only despair in the vision. But if our Lord had a Judas among his disciples, and then Pentecost followed for the rest; if the early Church had an Ananias and Sapphira, and yet went on multiplying and conquering; we too can labor on in hope and assurance of ultimate victory.

V. POINTS OF CONTACT WITH MODERN LIFE. I. THE FOLLY AND SINFULNESS OF LYING.

The Purpose of This Lesson is to lead every person, old or young, to love the truth, and to hate with intense repulsion all lying and deceit, and every kind of falsehood, and dishonesty in every form and degree, because these evils are mean and deadly, the ruin of the conscience, the breaking of God's laws, the public proof that the one who does these things is not a gentleman, not a heart Christian, but a servant of Satan, and therefore shut out from the Kingdom of Heaven.

Lying to One's Self. It is of the utmost importance that we should not lie to ourselves, trying to deceive ourselves as to our motives; offering excuses to ourselves in order to hide from ourselves the real reasons for our conduct; as when we make the faults of Christians the excuse for our not becoming Christians, or when we say to ourselves that we are wild and do not go to church because our parents were too strict.

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

"Friends, if we be honest with ourselves,
We shall be honest with each other."
— George Macdonald, in *Marquis of Lossie*.

Truthfulness is the only condition on which human intercourse is possible, and it lies at the foundation of all personal character. No matter how bad a man is, there is room for hope with respect to him if he is essentially truthful and honest; but if he is a liar, if truth and error are confounded in his own mind and character, there is nothing to build upon. A great liar always begins with small lies, and finds in them his training for high degrees in the "Ananias Club," and the highest degree is hypocrisy, which Christ denounced as among the deadliest of all sins.

The Self-Injury in Lying. Lying comes not of aggressive shrewdness but of cowardice and a shallow cunning that is often treacherous and tricks the lie into transparency.

"It is not the danger of being found out by others that is most to be dreaded; far more dreadful is it that the liar must know himself to be a liar. His self-respect suffers — the leaven in him loses strength and leaves him dead dough."

"The cunning that leads to lying is a rot that must permeate the whole character and make a man uncertain of himself. It distorts his perspective, obscures his vision, and warps his comprehension. The habit of misrepresentation leads to misconcep-

tion, the judgment becomes as erratic as the tongue, and there results the man who 'couldn't tell the truth if he wanted to.'

"Nothing so shakes the confidence of one's friends as known lying does; nothing so shatters one's own self-confidence as does lying, whether known to others or not.

"The cowardice that fathers lying increases with the lie. Fear of detection joins with self-contempt in making the liar a greater coward than before. One lie calls for another in its defence. Soon a tangled web spun of falsehood makes it all the harder for the liar to succeed in even an honest undertaking. His lies are a chain and ball upon his foot. They are a beam in his eye and a weight on his heart. He flounders along, most of his energy being required to overcome the impediment, while the truthful man easily outstrips him.

"The lying cheat in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, who was always swindling everybody, died in jail for debt, while his honest neighbor, who was swindled a thousand times, steadily prospered and died rich and respected. Fiction—eh? Well, it is immortal as fiction, because it is fact the world over all the time." — *Christian Herald*.

"Whatever you are, be brave, boys;
The liar's a coward and slave, boys.
Though clever at ruses
And sharp at excuses,
He's a sneak and a pitiful knave, boys."

Have the class look up in their Bibles the texts on lying referred to in the Additional Material, and so study them that they will hate all falsehood and lying, and deceit of every kind.

2. MODERN FORMS OF HYPOCRISY. What is Hypocrisy? An imitation of a person's speech and gestures. Dissimulation of one's real character or belief; especially, a false assumption of piety or virtue; a feigning to be better than one is; the action of character of a hypocrite. The word hypocrite comes from the Greek word meaning *actor*, one who plays a part upon a stage, usually, in ancient times, in a mask. The player appears in one character when he is really another; the beggar may



Wolf in Sheep's Clothing. (Æsop's Fable.)

be dressed like a king, and a fool act the part of a wise man. Hence, the word came to mean the assuming of a false appearance of virtue or religion.

There has been nothing more terrible than the denunciations of Jesus against those scribes and Pharisees who were deliberate hypocrites. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" repeated over and over again in Matthew 23. Jesus compares hypocrites to wolves in sheep's clothing; sepulchres adorned above, but full of corruption. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1).

"Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer,
Soft smiling and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown." — Dryden.

"This then is hypocrisy — not simply for a man to deceive others, knowing all the while that he is deceiving them, but to deceive himself and others at the same time." — J. H. Newman in *Parochial Sermons*. From *Century Dictionary and Cyclopaedia*.

"He who professes to love God but so lives that he makes life harder for others contradicts his own profession. We cannot ignore the command to love one another and keep the commandment to love God."

Hypocrisy in Society. The "polite" or "society" lie is often called "tact," but true Christian tact and courtesy will be able to be "tactful" without the lie.

It is hard, we grant, in the present formation of society, to keep from this society lie, which is often so transparent as to deceive no one. But can we expect that the children of this generation will grow up to love the truth and hate falsehood, as should all true servants of Jesus Christ, if they see that a lie, which is named in the Bible as one of the greatest sins, which separate us from the companionship of the redeemed, can be whitewashed and appear in good society!

"If you want your children to be honest with you, why should you not be honest with them? If you would not have them deceive you, why should you attempt to deceive them? If you would teach them by precept, why should you not teach them also by example? Is it any wonder that your child should shut you out of its confidence in similar matters and in the same manner in which you have yourself taught it to deceive? Why should you strike and slay the very confidence which the Creator has so wisely placed in the heart of every child in the integrity and honesty of its parents?" — *The Christian*.

"*Taught to Lie.* A boy of twelve years of age, who seemed disposed to emulate the character of George Washington in one respect at least, was brought up before the police magistrate at Jefferson Market Court. His mother had placed him as a servant with a lady at Long Branch, and he ran away. On being arraigned, the justice asked: 'Did not the lady treat you well?' 'Yes, sir,' the boy replied.

"'Did she give you a good home?' 'Yes, sir,'

"'Then why did you not stop with her?' 'Because she made me tell lies!'

"'Tell lies!' said the surprised justice, 'how did she make you tell lies?'

"'When people called to see her she made me say to them that she was not at home, when she was at home,' replied the little fellow.

"The boy was sent to the juvenile asylum, but nothing was done to the lady who had taught him to tell the fashionable lie." — *N. Y. Observer*.

"It's mighty hard to say the thing

That you feel you ought to say;

It's easier far to just agree

In a pleasant, smiling way!

Sometimes it's right and they call it tact,

And sometimes you're glad that you

Can play the game in a double way —

But sometimes it's scarcely — true.

"Give me the girl who tells the truth

In the face of right or wrong;

Or give me the one who doesn't speak

To add to a tale too long!

Give me a girl who uses tact

In a tactful, truthful way —

For she is the one who plays the game.

In the way she ought to play.

"Playing the game — the game of Life —

Is a task we all must do;

And the girl who wins in the game of Life

Is the one who sees it through,

Sees it through in an honest way,

With a handclasp firm and true,

And a pleasant word, and a smile she means;

And I hope that kind is . . . you!"

— *Margaret E. Sangster*.

LESSON V (18). — February 1.

PETER AND JOHN IN SAMARIA. — Acts 8:4-39.

PRINT Acts 8:4-8, 14-25.

(May Be Used with Missionary Applications.)

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* — ACTS 1:8.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 11:1-9.

Additional Material for Teachers: 2 Kings 17:24-41; Ezra 4:1-24; Luke 10:33-35; John 4:1-42.

Primary Topic: TELLING OTHERS ABOUT JESUS.

Lesson Material: Acts 8:26-39.

Memory Verse: Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16:15.

Junior Topic: PETER AND JOHN IN A STRANGE CITY.

Lesson Material: Acts 8:4-25.

Memory Verses: Matt. 28:18-20.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THREE MISSIONARIES AND THEIR TRIUMPHS.

Additional Material : Acts 8 : 26-40.

Topic for Young People and Adults : COMMERCIALIZING RELIGION.

Additional Material : Matt. 10 : 9, 10 ; John 12 : 1-6 ; Acts 1 : 18, 19 ;
1 Cor. 9 : 6-15 ; 1 Tim. 6 : 3-10.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

Professor George H. Palmer of Harvard says : " In my teaching I must have a broad background of knowledge, which does not appear in speech. I cannot teach right up to the end of my knowledge, without a fear of falling off. My pupils discover this fear and my words are ineffective. They feel the influence of what I do not say."

In this particular lesson, a teacher must have a working knowledge, not only of the story as told in Acts, but a knowledge of, and even more necessary, interest in the missionary work of the modern church. Upon the awakening of the interest of the young people of to-day depends the success of missionary work in the future. Essential also is a working plan for the teaching of the lesson ; otherwise too much time may easily be taken in the study of the facts and not sufficient time left for the lessons which are to be drawn from these facts.

For all grades, this lesson should open out ways to learn something of missionary work in the early days of Christianity and to-day and of the various kinds of such work.

The **Primary grade**, taking the story of the Ethiopian for a starting point, can learn how people are to-day asking to know about our God and of our Saviour, and what the children can do to tell them.

The **Juniors** should see in Samaria a picture of a people who were despised and hated by the Jews and how the Holy Spirit was given to them as well as to the Jews ; and draw a lesson on the duty of telling everybody about Christ, of whatever race or rank.

The **Intermediate and Senior Classes**, after a brief account of the work of these missionaries, should learn of the triumph of the Gospel in missionary lands, becoming familiar with the names of some of the noted missionaries.

Young People and Adults can discuss the attitude of Simon and his modern counterparts ; the real commercial value

of the missionary work, and how far it influences its support ; " rice Christians " ; etc.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — About A.D. 36 or 37 ; soon after the martyrdom of Stephen, and just before the conversion of Paul.

Place. — Samaria, where the most of the lesson is placed, was the chief city of the province of the same name in Palestine between Judea and Galilee. The



Samaria.

Ruins of the Church of St. John.

people were a somewhat mongrel race, and much despised by the Jews. See John 4.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The martyrdom of Stephen and its results.
Why did Saul persecute the Christians?
The value of persecution ; modern instances.
Why did the Apostles not leave Jerusalem?
Illustrate this by modern missionaries.
The two Philipps.
Samaria and the Samaritans.
Simon Magus, a representative.
Why did Peter and John go to Samaria?
Divine Providence in missionary work.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Beginning of Christian Missions.

- I. PERSECUTION AND ITS UNEXPECTED RESULTS, vs. 1-4.
- II. PHILIP THE HOME MISSIONARY, vs. 5-13.
- III. PETER AND JOHN VISIT THE MISSION FIELD, vs. 14-25.
- IV. SIMON THE SORCERER, vs. 9-13, 18-25. Commercializing Religion.
- V. THE MAKING OF A FOREIGN MISSIONARY, vs. 26-39.
- VI. POINTS OF CONTACT WITH THE MISSIONARY WORK OF TO-DAY.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

The usual *Commentaries* on Acts, perhaps especially the *Expositor's Bible*. Professor Whyte's *Bible Characters*. Ramsay's *Pictures of the Apostolic*

Church. Neander's *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, Book II., gives a full account of Simon.

Books on both Home and Foreign Missions. For the most valuable and most recent books write to your own denominational missionary headquarters. These should be in your Sunday School Reference Library, and renewed and replenished as new books are issued.

Pliny's letter to the Emperor Trajan, concerning Christianity and persecution, though written much later than the time of this lesson, and about a totally different persecution, will nevertheless throw light in various ways on the results of this first real persecution of the church. It is given in Ramsay's *Church in the Roman Empire*.

There are very many interesting missionary stories which will give interest to the lesson. Write to your denominational Mission Rooms for them.

4. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

I. PERSECUTION AND ITS UNEXPECTED RESULTS, vs. 1-4. The little group of followers of the Master had grown into a well-organized church whose members were numbered by thousands (Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:1-7). The Christians were still living at Jerusalem under the teaching and training of the apostles, who



Martyrdom of St. Stephen.

Fra Angelico.

Fresco in Chapel of Nicolo V., Vatican, Rome.

had themselves been trained by their Master, Jesus. They needed this training to enable them to do the work of spreading the gospel through the world.

But there was danger that these disciples would remain too long in Jerusalem. Jesus had told them to "go into all the world" to "disciple all nations," "beginning at Jerusalem," but not remaining there after they had "received the promise of the Father" (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47, 49; Acts 1:4, 8).

The martyrdom of Stephen opened a new era for the church. "At that time,"

or more exactly, as in the Am. Rev., *on that day*, the very day of Stephen's death, "there arose a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem" (Am. R.). The prime mover in this persecution, it appears, was "a young man named Saul" (Acts 7 : 58).

Saul was a young man of good Jewish family, whose home was in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, northwest of Palestine, where some of our missionaries have long lived and taught the gospel of Jesus. In his early years he was sent to Jerusalem to finish his education, and for several years studied under Gamaliel, one of the most eminent of all the doctors of the Law.

This young man was an enthusiastic devotee of the Jewish religion. He sincerely hated the Christians because he thought they were ruining the Jewish commonwealth, and the religion of his Bible, as he understood it. Later he was himself converted to the Christian faith (Acts 9) and became the great Apostle to the Gentiles, taking, in this especial work, his Roman name of Paul.

"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church" (v. 3), devastated it as an army devastates the enemy's country, or as wild beasts ravage a flower garden. He put men and women in prison, going out as far as Damascus, 130 miles north of Jerusalem, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." The Christians fled to all parts of Judea and Samaria, "and it seemed for a moment that the Church in Jerusalem was killed."

The Apostles, the Leaders of the Church, however, remained in Jerusalem, ready to die rather than flee. They were like Nehemiah of old, who said to Sanballat, "Should such a man as I flee? and who is there who being such as I would go into the temple to save his life?" It was not fitting that they should flee. Their steadfastness would strengthen the believers everywhere. Their fleeing would almost break up the Church. They must remain at every cost.

They did just what our missionaries have done during wars in Turkey and in China. Not because they could not escape, but because they would not desert their work, nor fail in their duty. Note the case of our missionaries in Mexico, who, although forced to flee because of the actual fighting which rendered it impossible for them to do their work, yet returned as soon as the fighting retreated to other parts of the country, before the land became quiet. As F. W. Robertson wrote: "To stand unchained with perfect liberty to go away, held only by the higher chains of duty, and let the fire creep up to the heart — this is heroism."

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,

Never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph;

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better."

The Results of the Persecution. First : the more the persecution the more the Gospel prevailed. There was a great exodus from Jerusalem, and those that went took the Gospel with them, and preached Jesus Christ. The persecution opened the way, in each town or village where they found shelter, for speaking about Jesus and his teachings; for they must explain why they left Jerusalem and were now wanderers. Their persecution would arouse the sympathy of many. They were as seed scattered in all directions by the farmer sowing his field broadcast, in Jerusalem, Judea, Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and the world.

It advertised the good news; it proved that the piety of the church was no temporary excitement, but a steady burning and shining light. And this light caused men to see more clearly the true God and the Gospel.

Illustration. When Tyndale published at Worms his first complete edition of the New Testament several hundred copies reached England, where he had been forbidden to publish them for the common people. The king, Henry VII, ordered them to be purchased, and with all others that could be bought, they were publicly burned at St. Paul's Cross, London, A.D. 1526. But the money paid for them enabled Tyndale to get out a new and more accurate edition, of which three times as many copies were sold in England as had been burned. See the full story in Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*.

Second : the persecution strengthened the faith, and aided the growth in character and in every virtue, of the active Christians. It broadened their vision, and increased their power and spiritual life. They grew in character, intelligence, depth of religious life, wider views, nearness to Jesus, good works, missionary spirit, power of helping others, courage, wisdom, joy in the Holy Spirit; it led to more prayer, a stronger faith, a firmer courage, more generous giving, more fervent preaching.

5. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8. And there was great joy in that city.

14. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

II. PHILIP THE HOME MISSIONARY, vs. 5-13. About two years before this great persecution, the church at Jerusalem had so grown that it was necessary to relieve the apostles of some of its business details, so they might give their time and strength wholly to the preaching and teaching for which they were most peculiarly fitted. Accordingly the church elected seven of their best men to undertake this business end of the church (Acts 6:1-7). Two of these men became more than business managers; they became great religious forces. They were Stephen the martyr, and Philip the Deacon and Evangelist. (It was not Philip the Apostle.)

When the Great Persecution came upon the disciples at Jerusalem, Philip was one who, leaving that city, preached the Gospel wherever he went. Through dangers and opposition and toil, Philip went forward to Samaria. He leaped over the barriers that separated the Jews from the Samaritans, as Jesus had done some years before (John 4), and preached Jesus the Messiah, the Living Saviour, and redemption from sin, so earnestly and with such power that the Samaritans became disciples. In proof of the truth of his teaching the Lord gave him such power that he wrought many miracles, which illustrated the loving kindness, helpfulness, and power of Christ and his gospel. It met their needs in a land where there were almost no trained doctors, no hospitals, and where very little could be done for the sick.

Maclaren well points out that "the language of Luke is singularly discriminating as to the effects of the two weapons. The miracles rouse attention, making the Samaritans 'give heed' to messenger and message. They caused great joy, as demoniacs, palsied, and lame were healed and given back to their beloved. But it was the preaching that led the Samaritans to 'believe.' Miracle is 'the great bell before the sermon,' but the good tidings is what evokes the faith that saves."

"There was joy, great joy in that city,
A joy unheard of before,
A joy without sadness, or pity,
A joy with all joy in its store.

"Full many years of grief and tears,
That city in the past had known;
But now there comes a sweet relief —
Her sorrows and her griefs have flown.

"For Philip, a fugitive preacher,
To this city, Samaria, comes down.
He tells them of Christ, the great Teacher,
The crucified king of renown.

"From his lips they list to the story,
From sin salvation is found,
The cross is the symbol of glory
And 'blessing for all doth abound.'"

— Rev. E. Stuart Best, D.D.

The result was that those many Samaritans who were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, the Living Son of God, were baptized, as the outward condition of admission to the Church.

III. PETER AND JOHN VISIT THE MISSION FIELD, vs. 14-25. When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans had believed and been baptized as members of the Christian Church, they sent Peter and John, the foremost of the Twelve, as a delegation to Samaria. The object of this delegation seems to be to obtain a true report of these strange doings there. Were these true conversions? Should the Samaritan converts be received and welcomed in spite of the barriers between them and Jews? Besides this Peter and John could give wise counsel to the new converts, and further instruction in the teachings of Jesus, and confer some spiritual gifts. It resembled in some respects the delegations of the officers of our Missionary Boards to the mission fields, to see themselves how the work is progressing, to encourage and advise the missionaries as to certain aspects of their work, and to report as eye witnesses to the Christians at home who are giving the money to send the Gospel to these lands. In other respects it resembled the visit of an old and tried missionary to some of the mission stations at a distance from his own, where young,

15. Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17. Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.

19. Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

less experienced missionaries have been working, in order to give them the benefit of his experience, and the comfort of his encouragement and fellowship.

Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans that they might receive the Holy Spirit. That was the test and proof whether they were to be Christians equally with the Jews. They laid their hands on the new converts, and they received the Holy Spirit, as did the Jews on the day of Pentecost. That was the answer.

The Delegates testified to the result of Philip's work, and preached the word of the Lord in Samaria and in many villages of the Samaritans on their way back to the church at Jerusalem.

IV. SIMON THE SORCERER, vs. 9-13, 18-25. Going back to the time before Philip went to Samaria, Luke tells us of a **certain man called Simon**. Little is known of him. The number of legends which a century or two later clustered around this Simon shows that he made a deep impression at the time. **Sorcery**: the Greek word is from *magos*, whence our word "magic." At first the word denoted the acts of wise men who interpreted dreams. Hence, it came to denote any enchanter or wizard, and in a bad sense, a juggler or quack. Simon doubtless exercised the same arts as the modern fortune-teller, with perhaps a knowledge of chemistry and the powers of hypnotism, mesmerism, sleight-of-hand, and ventriloquism. Many of these effects are very wonderful, and inexplicable to all but the initiated, so it is not strange that Simon bewitched the people, so that they all gave heed to him, believing his claim that he was some great one. The Samaritans, like the rest of the Jews, seem to have been expecting a Messiah, not only a political but a religious deliverer, "and one in whom the promise of Deut. 18:15 would be fulfilled." So that the soil was prepared for any one who could give presumptive evidence that he was the Expected One.

When Philip the Evangelist came upon the scene there was a collision of the two forces. How long the battle lasted we do not know.

Note the difference between the two men and their messages.

Simon did marvellous things which caused wonder but helped no one.

Philip did greater wonders, which were "signs" of God's goodness and love, full of grace and healing, worthy of God.

Simon made the people marvel at his skill.

Philip brought them forgiveness and salvation, life, joy, peace in God.

Simon presented himself as "some great one."

Philip preached Jesus as the Saviour and Son of God, and kept himself in the background.

Simon sought to gain money and reputation for himself.

Philip sought only the good of others, and met their needs.

Simon's deeds might be deceptive.

Philip's were beyond all possibility of deception.

PHILIP GAINED THE VICTORY OVER SIMON.

The result was that *Simon* himself believed also, but whether he was a sincere believer is doubtful. If sincere, he was ignorant, and misunderstanding.

For when Peter and John had come to Samaria, and the Holy Spirit had come upon the Samaritan Christians at the laying on of the hands of the Apostles, *Simon* offered them money, if they would give him the same power (vs. 18, 19), without doubt thinking that they were merely more skilful jugglers than himself, who might be induced for a consideration to sell to him their "tricks of the trade."

21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

24. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25. And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

But Peter indignantly denounced him, declaring that his heart was not right in the sight of God; that he was still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. He urged him to pray for forgiveness if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee (vs. 20-23).



Simon Magus.

From an old print.

"He Offered Them Money."

Simon answered, Pray ye to the Lord for me, but his repentance does not seem so much for the sin, as in view of some dire results that may come upon him through this unseen and unknown force (v. 24).

Commercializing Religion. In the Middle Ages this story, and the name of this man, were used to signify the attempt to purchase the gift of God with money. The buying of office and preferment in the Church was called *Simony*.

In our day there are those who find in the Church a means for their prospering in worldly ways. There would be no hypocrites in the Church of Christ if there were not something

there which called out the desire of those who were not spiritually inclined. A man who desires position and influence can sometimes obtain them by professing to worship God a little better than the common run of mankind. Sanctity on Sunday is used by ungodly men to screen evil-doing on the rest of the days of the week. We see men who are trusted because of their apparently blameless outward life, and their prominence in the Church, giving the lie to their religious pretensions and showing their true character when that course seems to present the best results for them; or at their death, when many secrets are bared.

But this does not mean that the Church is composed of hypocrites and time-servers; nor that those who serve the Church do it for money or power or fame. A rotten apple in the barrel does not mean that all the apples are bad. But a rotten apple will contaminate the others if it is not discovered and removed.

V. THE MAKING OF A FOREIGN MISSIONARY, vs. 26-39. Philip had done his work in Samaria, and now the Lord sent him on another mission. He sent an angel, — whether in some visible form, or by some inward communication, or by vision, is not revealed, and is a matter of small consequence. He was directed to

take the road that led to the south toward Gaza, a city near the Mediterranean, toward Egypt.

At the same time an Ethiopian Jew who had come from the kingdom of Queen Candace, in Africa, not far from the headwaters of the Nile, to worship at Jerusalem, was returning to his country and to his work as treasurer of the queen. He was taking the road toward Gaza.

The time and the route were so arranged by God's Providence that Philip and the Ethiopian should arrive at the junction of the roads at the same hour. Every life is full of such providences.

While sitting in his chariot the Ethiopian was reading aloud as was the custom, in order to beguile the way. Some idea of the character of the man may be obtained from the fact that he was reading from the Hebrew Scriptures, from Isaiah 53: 7, 8.

Philip ran to meet him, listened to his reading, and asked him, as he ran beside him, *Understandest thou what thou readeest?*

How can I, except some man should guide me? was the reply, coupled with an invitation to Philip to sit with him, so that they could talk.

Philip began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus, the glad tidings of salvation, the strange and marvellous correspondence between Jesus in his life, death, and character, and the picture of the Messiah which the prophets had painted; and all could see that the picture was a portrait of Jesus.

The Treasurer of Candace believed on Jesus, and was baptized by the roadside. Reëntering his chariot, he went on his way rejoicing, to his home and work, THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSIONARY.

VI. POINTS OF CONTACT WITH THE MISSIONARY WORK OF TO-DAY.

"To know what is going on in the mission fields is a liberal education." — *Pres. Hopkins, at the Haystack Meeting.*

The Missionary Work has had a marvellous success in the last few years, beyond anything known since the first century. The missionaries have proved themselves heroes and statesmen. The women have vied with the men in courage, in heroism.

"The sending of missionaries into our Eastern possessions is the maddest, most expensive, most unwarranted project that was ever proposed by a lunatic enthusiast," was what the British East India Company said at the *beginning* of the nineteenth century.

"In my judgment Christian missionaries have done more lasting good to the people of India than all other agencies combined," was what the English Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal said at the *close* of the nineteenth century." — *Record of Christian Work.*

"*Muck-raking the Missionaries.*" I read with the utmost interest an article by Dr. Clark with this title, which appears to me to cover correctly the situation in regard to missionaries in the Far East. I happened to be in the party which journeyed around the world on the steamship *Cleveland* a few years ago, and at the start of the journey had no interest either for or against the missionaries in the Orient; a fact perhaps not to my credit, but still a fact, and one showing that I began that memorable trip with an open mind and without bias.

"From that wonderful trip I returned with a deep feeling that the missionaries



Philip and the Eunuch.

whom I studied in India, China, and Japan are doing a splendid work along their medical and educational lines, and with a feeling nearly as deep that most of their religious work was destined to bear good fruit in a not-far-distant future.

"The contrast between the unselfish and earnest devotion of the average missionary with whom I talked and the entirely selfish purpose of a very large fraction of the white business men whom I studied in Oriental seaports was startling. I do not mean a *majority* of the white business men there, but a very large percentage, perhaps as large as a quarter, or nearly that. Some such percentage appeared to have a conception that the main reason for existence on the part of the natives was that the natives afforded a superior chance for these merchants to 'get rich quick,' by exploiting the inferior race with commercial goods and Western business methods."

— *Daniel D. Bidwell, in C. E. World.*

A Word-picture of a Missionary in Korea; an illustration of the truth just stated. "On into the night his room was the rendezvous for all classes. Men with Mongol thoughts and fetid breath sat cross-kneed about him, shouting all manner of useless questions over and over, proposing that he measure his strength of arm with them, asking for his hat and boots to try on. Frequently, when night came, three or four of these callers would stretch out on the floor of the seven by eight by ten room to sleep, the hottest end of the bake-oven being given to the foreigner as a mark of honor. Every door was closed and no chink of ventilation was allowed you, lest Horangee, the tiger, come and eat you. As the morning dawned, a new crowd came, and all the old salutations and explanations would have to be gone over. Is it any wonder missionaries need a 'furlough home' occasionally?"

The whole world is waking up. Schools and colleges have been built. Revival meetings for students and professors and leading officials have done a great work.

"The Asiatic and African races are undergoing sweeping transformations in their thinking, their relations to the nations of the West, and in their religious conceptions."

"China and Japan have held the balance of power in Eastern Asia, constituting a new and significant relation to the Western nations. Already the Far East is seething with a new national and international life for which she is seeking a substantial religious foundation."

"These conditions demand, while the situation is plastic, the concentration of the unifying forces of Christendom. To-day the great majority of these people are more accessible, and even more eager for Christian instruction than they have ever been before in all the history of modern missions."

"The foreign missionaries, with their prestige, their institutions already established, and with their messages of comfort, hope and regeneration, hold a position unique in history and pregnant with assurances of universal international good order and brotherhood and permanent peace for the world. Foreign missionaries can now render a genuine patriotic and national service, both to the country from which they come and the country in which they serve. Thoughtful people have come to realize what men eminent in statecraft are beginning to affirm, that foreign missionaries have been an effective force for breaking down barriers between East and West. It is clear that foreign missionaries are true soldiers of the better order which is to bind the world together."

"We, therefore, call upon all who love their country, who long and pray for universal brotherhood and for an abiding peace among nations, who hope to see the principles taught by Jesus Christ become the principles underlying all human society and ruling the national life of the world, to regard no effort too exhausting, and no sacrifice too great for the fullest vitalization of all missionary agencies and for the completest possible mobilization of the forces of the Christian Church for the redemption of the world." — *The Churchman Afield, in Boston Transcript.*

LESSON VI (19). — February 8.

PETER AT LYDDA AND JOPPA. — Acts 9:32-43.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.* — JAMES 5:15.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 61.

Additional Material for Teachers : Luke 5:17-26; 8:40-46.

Primary Topic : WHAT A KIND WOMAN DID.

Lesson Material : Acts 9:36-42.

Memory Verse : This woman was full of good works. Acts 9:36.

Junior Topic : WHAT PETER DID AT LYDDA AND JOPPA.

Lesson Material : Acts 9:32-43.

Memory Verses : Matt. 10:7, 8.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE BEAUTY AND INFLUENCE OF AN UNSELFISH LIFE.

Additional Material : Ruth 2:1-23; Ps. 41:1-3; Prov. 31:20.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL POWER.

Additional Material : Mark 9:28, 29; Luke 5:16, 17; 6:12, 19; Eph. 3:14-19.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

"Tell it again" — how often we hear this from the lips of the little child when he recognizes the beginning of a well-known story.

Many of the Bible stories are familiar to most of us — particularly to those who have been brought up by a Bible-loving mother, but none perhaps more familiar than the healing of the man with the palsy and the raising of Tabitha from the dead.

A lesson on familiar stories such as these is a splendid place for the teacher who has been led into the temptation of telling the story and drawing out the application himself, to begin to reform by developing the ideas from the pupils themselves. The pupils in all the grades will welcome the opportunity to study in this lesson the beauty and value of unselfishness, and it can be illustrated not only by the story of Dorcas, but by many incidents known to themselves. All can make the practical application of their own duty and some can show the fruits of unselfishness in their own life.

The Intermediate and Senior grades will add to this the influence of Dorcas on the work of the church and can find other examples of unselfish help to others in other parts of the Bible.

The Young People and Adults, using also their Additional Material, will note the connection between prayer and power, can trace the same connection in the life of Jesus, and draw conclusions as to how they themselves can acquire the spiritual power which will make them a true source of help to others.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Between A.D. 38 and 41. Not long after the conversion of Paul.

Place. — The two neighboring cities of Lydda and Joppa. *Joppa*, the modern

Jaffa, is a port on the Mediterranean Sea from which a railroad has for some years run to Jerusalem.

Lydda is 13 miles S.E. of Joppa, 25 miles N.W. of Jerusalem.

Saron (v. 35) is the Old Testament Sharon, a rich district of the maritime plain along the coast of the Mediterranean north of Joppa.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Causes of the rest from persecution.

The conversion of Saul.

A word picture of Lydda, then and now.

A word picture of Joppa, then and now.

The character of Dorcas.

Dorcas societies in the history of the church.

The organization of our class for work.

The spiritual value of unselfish service.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Books and commentaries on the Acts and on Peter as given in other lessons. Ramsay's *Pictures of the Apostolic Church*. Adeney's *Women of the New Testament*. *Women of the Bible*, chapter by Rev. Geo. Milligan, D.D. Dr. J. R. Miller's *Practical Religion*. Poems by Geo. MacDonald and Thomas Toke Lynch. Mrs. Charles' story, *The Victory of the Vanquished*. Sheldon's *Robert Hardy's Seven Days*. *Lazarus and Other Poems*, by Plumptre.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : Peter Doing Wonderful Works.

- I. THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH, Acts 9:1-31.
- II. PETER RESTORES ÆNEAS TO HEALTH, vs. 32-35.
- III. PETER RESTORES DORCAS TO LIFE, vs. 36-43.
- IV. THE BEAUTY AND INFLUENCE OF AN UNSELFISH LIFE.
- V. THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL POWER.

32. And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

I. THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH, Acts 9:1-31. (1) **THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS, vs. 1-30.** The most marked event or epoch in the story of the progress of Christianity was the conversion of Saul, who afterwards became Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles. We have seen him as the leader in the great persecution of the Christians which led to the scattering of the disciples all over the country, and the spread of the preaching of the Gospel to Samaria, and other places where it would not have gone so soon under other circumstances. In the very midst of this persecution Saul is halted. On his way to Damascus for the express purpose of arresting the Christians there, he sees the risen Christ, and as a result of the vision himself becomes a Christian.

(2) **REST FROM PERSECUTION, v. 31.** The conversion of Saul put an end to a large measure of the persecution, where he had been the leader. Another cause of the cessation from persecution lay in the troubles the Jews themselves were having with their Roman rulers. They were fully occupied with their own troubles so that the infant Church enjoyed a period of four or five years of rest. It was a time of outward peace, of rest from conflict, and hence a season of growth, of spiritual development, of Christian activity.

The result of the daily life of the Christians and their character was that "the church . . . was multiplied." Not only in numbers but in quality and value. Every additional gift or virtue or talent in a man, or in a church, is not merely so much added, but is a multiplier, for it increases the value of each and every other gift.

II. PETER RESTORES ÆNEAS TO HEALTH, vs. 32-35. During the times of persecution the apostles remained in Jerusalem, and we hear of only one visit made to any other place, — that to Samaria, where Peter and John went to investigate the stories of the conversion of the Samaritans and make sure that it was the will of the Lord that they as well as the Jews should be admitted to the new Kingdom of God which Christ and his disciples were preaching.

But after the cessation of the persecution it was most natural that the apostles should make many missionary tours around the country of the Jews, for that had been Jesus' method of teaching, and they had been trained in that method during their life with him. So Peter went everywhere visiting and encouraging and teaching the new churches formed by the persecuted Christians, and keeping them in touch with the apostolic church at Jerusalem. The accounts which follow may fairly be taken as specimens of many such journeys of progress, inspection, and helpfulness.

Peter did more for the church at Jerusalem by going on these evangelizing tours than by concentrating all energies on Jerusalem alone. Work beyond its borders always aids the home church. "It is like the dew of heaven. It is twice blessed; it blesses him that gives, and him that takes."

32. The saints, the Christians, which dwelt at Lydda. Lydda, in the rich plain of Sharon in north-western Judea, was a city of considerable size, about a day's journey from Jerusalem. "The valley of Sharon, the ideal Sharon of Hebrew poetry, formed a rich and well-watered pasturage, extending along the western base of the Carmel range, between the mountains and the sandy strip of seashore, as far south as the neighborhood of Joppa. Lydda was the principal centre of population in the southern portion of the



From a photograph by Bonfils.
General View of Modern Lydda.

33. And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

35. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

valley." It is called *Lod* in the Old Testament (1 Chron. 8:12), and *Ludd* in modern Arabic. "The modern village is very dilapidated, a haunt of dirt diseases, the effect of modern squalor being intensified by the presence of noble ruins testifying to former prosperity." — *Hastings*.

33. As Peter went about doing good he found a certain man named Æneas, "a corrupt form of the classical Æneas," the middle syllable being short (Æ'nē-as). "Though Æneas is not called a disciple this appears to be implied in the statement that Peter was visiting the 'saints.' Peter's cure in the name of Jesus Christ makes it almost necessary to suppose that Æneas had faith in Jesus." — *Professor Gilbert*.

Note that Peter "found" Æneas. It was not chance, but providence, in connection with his own seeking for ways to help others.

Eight years, stated to show that the cure was miraculous. **Palsy**, a contraction of the word "paralysis," was used by the ancient physicians in a much wider sense than to-day, and included not only what we call paralysis, which is rarely very painful, but also catalepsy and tetanus, *i.e.* cramps and lockjaw, both of which are very painful and dangerous.

34. Very quietly (especially when contrasted with the methods of the exorcists of that day), yet with an intensity of faith, **Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole** (Am. R.). This translation is a very expressive term for complete health, where every part of the body is present and in perfect condition. It is the type of the healing of the soul from sin, into the perfection of the soul's nature and activities.

Peter gave all the credit where it belonged. It was Jesus, the living Christ, who has done the miracle through Peter, and it was this fact that caused all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron (Sharon) to turn to the Lord (v. 35).

Arise and make thy bed.

The bed was a mat or rug of sheepskins, or quilted coverlet. The simple act of rolling this

up, and stowing it away, is here called making the bed. Peter bade him perform for himself this service in order (1) to quicken and test the man's faith; (2) to prove the reality of the cure; and (3) very probably in direct imitation of the act of Christ in a similar miracle (Mark 2:11, 12). In the same way in modern times a wise pastor or friend, when one has been raised from the sickness of sin to the new life in Christ, will set him to work for Christ in the church and Sunday School and home, knowing that nothing consolidates Christian character like Christian labors.

"What a vivid belief these early Christians had! It required no small faith in the reality of the Lord's presence and of his power to heal to say 'Rise' to a man who had been bed-ridden for eight years." — *Dean Furneaux*.

III. **PETER RESTORES DORCAS TO LIFE**, vs. 36-43. There was at Joppa, the modern Jaffa, nine or ten miles northwest of Lydda, thirty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem. It has for centuries been one of the most frequented harbors of the Palestinian coast, although entrance is perilous except in the most quiet sea. We



Oriental Beds.

hear of its use as far back as the time of Solomon, when materials for the temple were brought thither by sea from Lebanon. All through the centuries we hear of it, either its use as a seaport, or its siege by enemies, which again proves its value as a port.

A certain disciple, a notable Christian as we see from the story. **Named Tabitha** (her Hebrew name) or **Dorcas** (her Greek name). The two names have the same meaning, "gazelle," which in the East was a favorite type of beauty. We do not



Site of the House of Tabitha, near Joppa.

know whether this expresses her appearance as "a lovely and beautiful woman, full of alertness and grace; or her spiritual loveliness and grace, which all can have, and which brings an attractiveness that no outward grace alone can produce."

There is no way to be so attractive, personally, as to be full of good works done in the most graceful, that is, heavenly manner. "I will make you," said the Roman maiden, "love me not only in spite of my deformity, but because

of it." So good works can transform even homeliness into charm, as in the reflection of the rays we forget the form of the jewel.

The Most Beautiful Hands. "An old legend says that once three young ladies disputed about their hands, as to whose were the most beautiful. One of them dipped her hands in the pure stream, another plucked berries till her fingers were pink, and the third gathered flowers whose fragrance clung to her hands. An old haggard woman passed by and asked for some gift, but all refused her. Another young woman, plain, and with no claim to beauty of hand, satisfied her need. The old woman then said, 'It is not the hand that is washed in the brook, nor the hand tinted with red, nor the hand garlanded and perfumed with flowers that is most beautiful, but the hand that gives to the poor.' As she spoke, her wrinkles were gone, her staff was thrown away, and she stood there an angel from heaven." — *J. R. Miller.*

Full of good works and almsdeeds, especially in making coats and garments for widows (v. 39), who in that country were a most unfortunate class. She was full, not of works she thought of and dreamed of doing, but of works which she did, was in the habit of doing, — which is implied in the use of the imperfect tense for the verb did.

Good Works. 1. Good works for the poor are characteristic of the Christian religion, as Christ commanded (Matt. 25).

2. They are proofs of discipleship (Matt. 25:34-46; Jas. 1:27). Not much flows from the stagnant pool of formal religion, but much from a fountain of living water in the soul. Good trees must bring forth good fruits in their season. We are God's children when we do God's works.

3. The personal element, the giving of one's self with the gift, is a necessary part of good works for the sick and poor. It is as necessary for the giver as for the receiver.

"Queen Maud, the wife of Henry I, went down amidst the poor and washed their sores, and administered to them cordials." — *Talmage.* So in later times Queen Elena of Italy went among the sufferers from the earthquake in Messina, and into the hospitals during the Great War. So Queen Mary of England, also, serves her people in helping the sick and wounded.

"If I might guess, then guess I would:
Amid the gathered folk,
This gentle Dorcas one day stood,
And heard what Jesus spoke.

"She saw the woven, seamless coat —
Half envious for his sake:
'Oh, happy hands,' she said, 'that wrought
That honored thing to make!'

37. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died : whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

38. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

39. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber : and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed ; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes : and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

"Her eyes with longing tears grew dim,
She never can come nigh
To work one service poor for him
For whom she glad would die!

"The king shall answer, Inasmuch
As to my brothers ye
Did it — even to the least of such —
Ye did it unto me."

"But hark ! he speaks a mighty word ;
She hearkens now indeed !
'When did we see thee naked, Lord,
And clothed thee in thy need?

"Home, home she went, and plied the loom
And Jesus' poor arrayed.
She died — they wept about the room,
And showed the coats she made."

— George Macdonald.

37. Dorcas was taken sick and died. Possibly as a martyr to her over-exertions in behalf of the poor ; and she may wear a martyr's crown as really as Stephen and Peter.

"These, though their names appear not on the scroll
Of martyrologists, laid down their life —
Not less a martyrdom in Jesus' eyes —
For his dear brethren's sake, watching the couch
Of loathsome sickness, or, of slow decay,
Or visiting the captive in his cell,
Or struggling with a burden not their own
Until their weary life-strings wore away —
These, too, are martyrs, brother." — *Bickersteth*.

Peter was still at Lydda when Dorcas died. The only possible hope of her restoration was the fact that Peter had not left that region. Still it does not seem that the friends of Dorcas really dared to hope for the raising of Dorcas from the dead. We do not know that Peter had ever worked such a miracle as this, or that he did so later. Very possibly all that they wanted was to have him with them, to tell him all their trouble and sorrow, and all the beautiful deeds of Dorcas, and receive his sympathy in their grief.

Two men were sent as quickly as possible to beg him to come to Joppa. He was only about nine miles distant, less than three hours' walk ; they could get him in six hours.

39. When he was come . . . the widows stood by him weeping. The poor widows for whom Dorcas had made the coats, "closefitting undergarments." "The word was used in classical Greek of men and women, more perhaps like a dressing-gown or cassock." Garments, "long-flowing outer robes or mantles," with the thought of abundance and multitude. *Shewing*. By pointing to the garments they had on (so the Greek implies).

40. Peter put them all forth. This was a most natural reminiscence of what Peter had seen Jesus do in the case of Jairus' daughter. (It is interesting to note in this case of Dorcas how many things show Peter's vivid memory of what Jesus had done in his presence.) This would keep him from interruption ; he could concentrate his mind on the Lord's will in the matter ; it would avoid all appearance of display. Probably Peter did not know at first what the result would be. *Kneeled down, and prayed* to learn the Lord's will, and to receive his power, to be filled with the Spirit as at Pentecost.

Tabitha, arise. If he used the Aramaic, the common language, the expression would be *Tabitha cumi*, differing but in one letter from the *Talitha cumi* of Mark 5 : 41, which he heard the Master speak in the sickroom at Capernaum.

41. And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42. And it was known throughout all Joppa ; and many believed in the Lord.

43. And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

Gave her his hand, to help her up *after* she was alive. Jesus took Jairus' daughter's hand *before* she was restored.

Presented her alive. What joy must have taken the place of mourning in that house and throughout Joppa !

42. And it was (" became," Am. R.) **known . . . and many believed in the Lord.** The good works which the disciples did, on the one hand, and the power of the Lord to heal and save, on the other, both commended the Gospel to the people, and made it known everywhere.

The Restoration of Dorcas (1) brought into prominence Christian care for the poor.

(2) It revealed more clearly the character of Jesus, reminding the people of his teachings and his works of mercy and love.

(3) It called attention to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead, and was still alive in heaven, and could do the same wonders through his disciples as he himself had done when on earth. It was no dead Saviour, but a living Saviour, whom the disciples preached.

(4) It was a lesson on immortality, teaching that the soul has an existence separate from the body ; and that eternal life, begun here, and continuing forever, is the life that should be most earnestly sought.

Dorcas doubtless continued her good works for many a year, with a clearer vision, a deeper devotion, a wider range of usefulness than she ever had before. Compare her with the wise man's picture of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31.

"And Dorcas in her daughters lives
Industrious and kind;
For help her good example gives
To willing hand and mind."— *Lynch*.

IV. THE BEAUTY AND INFLUENCE OF AN UNSELFISH LIFE. "Service is the noblest conception of life. 'The opportunities to do things for others are the substance ; the things one gets are the shadow.' Not on the mountain top of rare privilege, but on the low level of ordinary life is the chance to serve, for that is where men are. Christ helped most in the walks of everyday life, where were the children and beggars and sick folk. Only on the low-lying plane of common experience can we look into men's faces, shake their hands, speak comfortingly to them, do them kindly service. Say not : 'If only we had the opportunity we would serve !'"

The Happiness Road

"It's only just a little road,
The road that leads
To happiness. It's made of faith
And kindly deeds;

"Of pleasantness, of words that bless,
Of thoughts that heal;
Of very silent giving up
For others' weal.

"The road that leads to happiness
Is easy taking;
Beside it grass springs fresh and green
And buds are breaking.

"Oh, there are folks from far away,
And folks we know there.
So let us two take hands some day,
And oh, let's go there!"

— *Mary Carolyn Davies*.

"There is a way of doing kindness which looks as if no kindness had been done ; a gentle and delicate way which adds preciousness to the gift. I have known some men to do a kindness as if they were receiving it rather than giving it, so that the poor were not made to feel their poverty. This was Jesus Christ's method, and it will be ours as we approach his likeness." — *Joseph Parker*. Only the unselfish man can do a kindness in this way ; and the power of such kindness as this is the most wide-spread, and the most lasting.

Illustration, from the life of a missionary doctor in China a few years ago. "A terrible plague broke out and spread very rapidly, and in spite of the fact that the doctor worked day and night in his endeavor to save them, many of the natives died. At last he caught the sickness himself, and all thought he was going to die. Then a number of the men of that town, most of them merchants, made a pilgrimage to the

temple of their god. They believed that he had power over their own lives, and at will could curtail their lifetime in order that more years might be given to some one else. They therefore journeyed to the temple to offer up so many years of their lives that the missionary might be spared." — *Sunday School Chronicle*.

Look around you in the world, in the city or town or village where you live. Which are the most honored, have the truest influence on the lives of others, are most mourned when they are called home to their heavenly Father? Is it those who do great works of charity to be seen of men? Is it those who devote all their "spare time" to charitable work? Is it those who give the largest sums for the service of God and man? Or is it those who, with no thought of self, or desire to be thanked, are always ready with their love and sympathy, and with gifts according to their power, be it little or much?

"Love thyself last. Look near. Behold thy duty
To those who walk beside thee down life's road.
Make glad their days by little acts of beauty,
And help them bear the burden of earth's load.
Love thyself last. Look far, and find the stranger,
Who staggers 'neath his sin and his despair.
Go, lend a hand and help him out of danger
To heights where he may see the world is fair."

— *Record of Christian Work*.

V. THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL POWER. What is it? Where did Peter get his power in this need? Where can we get the power to work for Christ in our times? Peter obtained it, and we can obtain it, by following the footsteps of the Master. We read in the story of Jesus' life that before every great epoch in his work, and before any day of power in healing the people, he retired and spent much time, sometimes all night, in prayer to God. (See Luke 5:16, 17; 6:12, 19; and many other places.) In Mark 9:28, 29, he tells his disciples that only by "prayer and fasting," which may be interpreted as the forgetting of self, and consecration to God, can the worst evils be cured. And Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians (3:14-19), exhorts his readers to be "filled with all the fulness of Christ" and then they will be able to so comprehend Christ that they can do his work, some of which is enumerated in the next chapter.

"The greatest contribution which any man can make to the social movement is the contribution of a regenerated personality, of a will that sets justice above policy and profit."

"God has His best things for the few
Who dare to stand the test;
God has His second choice for those
Who will not have the best.

"I want amid the victor throng
To have my name confessed,
And hear my Saviour say at last,
'Well done! you took the best.'

"There's scarcely one but vaguely wants
In some way to be blessed;
It is not blessing, Lord, I seek;
I want Thy very best.

"Give me, my Lord, Thy highest choice,
Though others take the rest;
Their good things have no charm for me,
Since I have found Thy best."

LESSON VII (20). — February 15.

PETER AND CORNELIUS. — Acts 10:1-11:18.

PRINT Acts 10:30-48.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him.* — ROM. 10:12.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 67.

Additional Material for Teachers: Acts 15:1-35; Gal. 2:1-21.

Primary Topic: GOD'S LOVE FOR EVERYBODY.

Lesson Material: Acts 10:1-48.

Memory Verse: He loved us and sent his Son. 1 John 4:10.

Junior Topic: PETER WINS A ROMAN CAPTAIN.

Lesson Material: Acts 10:1-48.

Memory Verses: Acts 10:34, 35.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE OVERCOMING OF PREJUDICE.

Additional Material : Rom. 2 : 1 ; 12 : 10, 16 ; Philemon.

Topic for Young People and Adults : SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS.

Additional Material : Acts 15 : 1-11.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

A very practical lesson and one full of action and of interest in itself. It is a lesson where the pupils can be made to do a large part of the work. Places mentioned can be looked up on the map ; information in relation to the Jewish laws about unclean food and of eating with the Gentiles ; and pupils can learn about the Roman army and the rank of a centurion as compared with officers in our own army to-day and they can name the cases and causes of prejudice in our own time and land and show why and how we can overcome this feeling.

In the younger grades it will be well to emphasize the love of God to all mankind. Let them understand how a Jew would look upon a Gentile and especially a Roman, and how this incident proved that all were alike loved by the Heavenly Father.

The Intermediate and Senior scholars can make a most practical application of their own attitude toward those not so favored as themselves, or belonging to the "despised races" ; showing them that prejudice has no place in Christianity.

The Young People and Adults should note the bearing of this incident on the opening of the door of Christianity to the Gentiles ; the brotherhood of all men ; and our duty in these circumstances.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — A.D. 41, a year or so after the events of the last lesson.

Place. — (1) Peter was living at Joppa, the modern Jaffa, the seaport of Jerusalem, in the house of Simon the tanner.

(2) Cornelius the Roman centurion

lived at Cæsarea, 35 miles north of Joppa. It was the political capital of the Herods.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Why did Peter make his home with Simon the tanner ?
Peter's trance on the housetop.
The Jewish laws of unclean meats.
Cornelius, and his character.
How was this a new era for the church ?
Peter's report to the church at Jerusalem.
The final decision of the church in regard to the Gentiles (Acts 15).
Racial prejudice to-day.
Religious prejudice.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Books on Peter and on the Acts named in previous lessons. Professor Ramsay's *Pictures of the Apostolic Church*, p. 159. McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*. Horace Bushnell's *Living Subjects*, "Outside Saints." *Sermon*, "Vision and Tasks," by Phillips Brooks. *Poem*, "The Vision and the Summons" by Susan Coolidge. *Cornelius the Centurion*, by Krummacher.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Broadening of the Church of Christ.

- I. CORNELIUS AND HIS VISION, vs. 1-8.
- II. THE BROADENING OF PETER, vs. 9-16.
- III. THE FIRST PREACHING TO THE GENTILES, vs. 16-48.
- IV. THE QUESTION BEFORE THE CHURCH, 11 : 1-18.
- V. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS.
- VI. THE OVERCOMING OF PREJUDICE.

I. CORNELIUS AND HIS VISION, vs. 1-8. CORNELIUS was a member of the ancient and distinguished Italian family, the Cornelian gens (something like a Highland clan), to which belonged also the famous Roman generals, Sulla and the Scipios. It is, however, possible that this man was not really one of this noble family, for "there were also many plebeians of this name, for Sulla bestowed the Roman franchise on 10,000 slaves, and called them after his own name, Corneli." — *Cambridge Bible*.

He was a Roman officer, a **centurion**, that is, about the same rank as a captain in our army, placed over a company of one hundred soldiers, with various subordinate officers. In practice, as in our companies, the actual number varied from 50 to 100 men.

He belonged to the **Italian band**, or cohort, so called because made up of Romans born in Italy. "An epitaph, about A.D. 70, found at Carnuntum on the Danube, commemorates one Proculus, a soldier of the Second Italian Cohort, engaged on detached service from the Syrian army. Thus there may well have been an Italian cohort in Syria thirty years earlier." — *Dean Furneaux*.

He was stationed at **Cæsarea** on the Samaritan coast, about thirty-three miles north of Joppa, where Peter was. It was at the northern end of the Plain of Sharon, and about seventy miles from Jerusalem. It was the political capital of Judea. Here Herod the Great had built a splendid city, with a large artificial harbor, and here lived, at least in the summer, the governors or procurators of the Roman province, Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus. "Broad quays, fine bazaars for trade, noble public buildings, commodious streets, lofty barracks for sailors and a palace used by the procurators; a huge open-air theatre . . . the whole adorned with . . . lavish ornamentation" showed the importance of the place.

In later years Philip the Evangelist and his four prophesying daughters lived here in Cæsarea (Acts 21), and he may have been a resident as early as this time. Cornelius may have heard something of the Christian religion through him, if this was true.

The Character of Cornelius. 1. He was a devout man, and one that feared God. "The words have a technical sense, and indicate that Cornelius was one of that large class of Gentiles who worshipped the God of the Jews, and endeavored to conform their lives in a general way to his will, while they did not accept circumcision, and thus become proselytes." — *McGiffert*. "He was one of the sort of men Dean Farrar has called 'seekers after God'; men like Socrates, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius." At that time the desire had been awakened in many hearts. The whole atmosphere was permeated with the new life Jesus had brought with him from his Father in heaven.

2. He was a good husband, father, and master, and led all his house, not only the family but the entire household, in his own righteous ways.

3. He gave much alms to the people, both Jews and Gentiles. His religion was practical, not formal.

4. And prayed to God alway. He filled the fountain of his spiritual life from the river that flows from the throne of God. He thus lived up to all the light he had, and constantly sought more and clearer light on his path.

What he prayed for can be seen in the answer which he received; in his earnestness in his fasting; and in the indication that he kept regular hours of prayer. (1) He wanted more and clearer light. (2) He wanted assurance of forgiveness of sins. (3) He wanted the fullness and freedom of holy living. (4) He wanted many doubts and difficulties solved. (5) He wanted to be closer to God, with a consciousness of his love and presence and care. (6) He wanted to know more about the life to come.



The Angel and Cornelius.

G. Pagliet.

The Hindrances and Difficulties in the Way of Cornelius were many. While we know nothing of his early training, we can be sure that he had been brought up in heathenism, with all its cruelties and unsatisfactory worship, which left his heart hungry, like the prodigal feeding on husks. "In an army, when a soldier is religious, his religion must be thorough." — *Rackham*. And this was especially true in those

days and in the Roman army. He had, therefore, to overcome his early training, the corrupting influence of his heathen friends and associates, the worldliness of his surroundings, the immoralities encouraged by a military life, and the danger of losing promotion in his chosen profession if he embraced an unpopular religion. To have become what he was already must have taken courage and firmness to no small degree. The true soul steers, not drifts.

THE VISION OF CORNELIUS (vs. 3-6). The word for vision here is not the same word as is used later in the chapter for Peter's trance. It was neither a trance nor a dream. Evidently, "openly" (Am. R.), plainly, without illusion. About the ninth hour, three o'clock in the afternoon, by the Roman method of computing time. Cornelius was observing the regular Jewish hour of prayer (v. 30), preceded by a fast. Thus in open daylight he saw an angel, of God. The divine messenger came in the form of a man, but in bright apparel to show his angelic nature. He was afraid. Such a messenger coming so unexpectedly and looking so intently, as into his very soul, would naturally make him afraid lest he had done something wrong, or lest some strange thing was to take place.

But the angel gently reassured him, telling him that his prayers and alms had been accepted by God as a memorial, that is, a "remembrance offering." What was to come was not a reward for praying and giving, but the state of heart which was expressed in those acts made it possible for Cornelius to receive still greater blessings.

Only to him that hath can more be given. No one can see the vision from the mountain top unless he has climbed the mountain's side. It is the faithful scholar in the lower schools who is called to come up higher and can make use of the higher.

5. Send men to Joppa. The new blessing must come through human instrumentality. One Simon, one of the many Simons in Joppa, designated by his other name, Peter. The expression implies that he was unknown to Cornelius. In verse 6 the address is given. **House is by the sea side.** "The sanitary laws of the ancients, it is said, required tanners to live out of the city, not only because of the dead animals which the nature of their business called them to use, but also because of the disagreeable odor and filth of their premises." The convenient prosecution of their business and the removing of the disagreeable refuse required that they should be near the water." — *Hackett*.

At once, eager and joyful, the centurion despatched on this errand two of his trusted household servants, and to protect them, a devout soldier, detached for the purpose from his command. Note that the devoutness of the officer seemed to have been communicated to his subordinates, as usually happens.

II. THE BROADENING OF PETER, vs. 9-16. It is interesting to note the movements of divine Providence here. The three messengers of Cornelius had started at some time after three o'clock, since that was the time at which the vision occurred. They must have spent the night at some town on the way, and were approaching Joppa, at the end of their thirty-mile walk, at about the sixth hour, noon, which was one of the regular times of prayer for the Jews. At this hour Peter went up upon the housetop to pray. "With the flat roofs of the Eastern houses, to which access could be obtained from outside without passing through the rooms of the building, the housetop formed a convenient place for retirement." — *Cambridge Bible*. "It was the place often chosen for the performance of religious duties. A wall or balustrade three or four feet high surrounds many of the roofs in the East, where a person may sit or kneel without being observed by others." — *Hackett*.

PETER'S VISION. In his long devotions Peter became very hungry, for the time had come for his usual meal, and we know not how hard his labors had been during the morning. He fell into a trance, "a throwing of the mind out of its normal state," into a state where visions are seen. And saw heaven opened, to show that the vision and the teaching came from God.

"What the apostle saw was an extended sheet, the four corners of which were held up, as it were, by cords let down from the four extremities of the opened sky. The significance of the outstretched sheet, as a figure of the wide world, and the four corners as the directions into which the gospel was now to be borne forth into all the world, has often been dwelt upon." — *Cambridge Bible*. But this is a mere illustration from the facts, and does not belong to the natural interpretation of the vision. According to Professor Vincent the corners are attached to heaven, and the suggestion of ropes holding the corners is an unwarranted use of the word. It is the technical expression in medical language for the ends of bandages, one which hardly

any one except a medical man would think of employing, as Hobart says in his *Medical Language of St. Luke*.

This sheet was full of animals, many of them the wild beasts and reptiles which the Jews considered unclean. "We must conceive of those animals which were ceremonially unclean as being more peculiarly conspicuous in the vision."

Three times a mysterious voice bade Peter rise from his knees and slay and eat the shocking food, three times he refused in horror, three times he was bidden to make nothing unclean that God had cleansed by bidding him partake of it, and then the great sheet was lifted and disappeared in the sky.

To eat of such food seemed to Peter to be almost treason to God and his nation. "No greater shock to a Hebrew could be imagined than to be told to assuage his hunger by eating unclean meats. It is recorded in the second book of Maccabees (6:18; 7:1) that Hebrews submitted to death that they might escape such an indignity." — *Schaff*. It was such distinctions which separated the Jews from the Gentiles, and which were essential to their training as the people of God, until there came a better, truer distinction between God's people and the world in the faith and character and life of Christians.

Illustration. This command meant to Peter what the command to break caste means to a Hindu. In 1832 a liberal-minded young Brahman of the highest caste, with some Hindu friends, determined to give the strongest possible proof of their freedom from prejudice: they ate a beefsteak together! "Not content with so declaring their contempt for Hindu custom, they threw what remained of the repast into the courtyard of a Brahman neighbor. The excitement which followed such an outrage was furious and threatening. The little band of innovators were driven from their homes and their families, were excommunicated from caste privileges, and barely escaped personal injury at the hands of the populace." — *From Vermilye's Life of Alexander Duff*.

16. This was done thrice, both to emphasize the truth as of the utmost importance, and to assure Peter beyond doubt that the message was from God.

III. THE FIRST PREACHING TO THE GENTILES, vs. 16-48. The messengers from Cornelius had in the meantime reached Joppa and had found their way to the house of Simon the tanner. They had made enquiry after they had entered the city. The Greek here means that they had asked constantly, thoroughly, for Simon's house as they passed through the streets. And having reached it, they asked whether Peter was there.

Before word of his visitors could reach him, the Holy Spirit in some way made Peter conscious of their coming, and said, Go with them, doubting nothing, having no hesitation or doubt as to the lawfulness and duty of going. Peter, of all the twelve apostles, was the one best prepared by his natural character to receive the vision and act upon it. He had "the impulsive and uncalculating spirit," to which "such a request as that of Cornelius would appeal most strongly, and he was just the man who would accept most unquestioningly the divine evidence of his conversion, and be quickest to act upon that evidence and receive the new convert as a Christian brother." — *McGiffert*. He would do what he knew to be right without regard to consequences, perhaps without seeing them.

21. Peter went down the outside stairway to the men and asked the reason for their seeking him. They confirmed the impression on the apostle's mind by reporting the vision of Cornelius, and the apostle took the first step toward fellowship with the Gentiles by lodging the messengers over night.

During the afternoon Peter prepared for his journey, doubtless conferring with the Joppa disciples. He was unusually cautious for such a headstrong disciple, and



From an old print.

The Vision of St. Peter.

30. And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

31. And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34. Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35. But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

took with him six of these disciples as witnesses and advisers for himself, and witnesses in his favor if his action was criticised by the Jerusalem church, as afterwards happened.

24. **On the morrow after leaving Joppa.** It was the fourth day after Cornelius' vision, they reached Cæsarea.

THE PREACHING TO CORNELIUS, vs. 24-43. Not knowing exactly when the delegation would arrive, Cornelius assembled in good season his kinsmen and near friends and many others that wished to come and hear what Peter had to say.



Peter Visits Cornelius. From an old print.

28. It is . . . unlawful. Peter begins by reminding his hearers of the great importance of the step he is taking. There must be some very good reason for the call if the breaking of the Jewish law were to be excused. "No pious Jew would of course have sat at the table of a Gentile. If a heathen were invited to a Jewish house, he might not be left alone in the room, else every article of food or drink on the table was henceforth to be regarded as unclean. If cooking utensils were bought of them, they had to be

purified by fire or water; knives to be ground anew, spits to be made red-hot before use, etc."—*Edersheim*. "So to-day in India the Hindu deals with the English in business affairs, but rarely admits him to his house, or to any social fellowship."—*Abbott*.

Captain Cornelius explained to Peter and to the assembled company his reasons for asking Peter to come to Cæsarea. **Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.**

And Peter opened his mouth, and preached the first sermon ever preached solely and strictly to the Gentiles. His subject was (v. 35): In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him, be he Jew or Gentile.

His first remark was that he had now gained by personal experience the knowledge that God is no respecter of persons. A "respecter of persons" is one who receives or treats others, not according to what they are, but according to their outward circumstances, such as wealth or social position, nationality, color. But God does not respect persons, for (1) all men alike need salvation; (2) there is one and the same condition of salvation for all. God loves all men, and wants all to be saved, and all who honestly and earnestly seek for him, and for salvation, shall certainly find.

36. The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

37. That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40. Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41. Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.

43. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

This is the voice of the deepest and most spiritual utterances of Holy Writ.

Then Peter tells them the story of the coming of the Son of God, of his life on earth, his death and resurrection, and the forgiveness of sins through his name for all who truly believe on him (vs. 36-43).

44. **While Peter yet spake.** The speech was a completed whole, and it was while Peter was uttering the last words without any interval that the Spirit came. It is probable that Peter would have continued in exhortation had not the interruption occurred, but at the wisest time the divine witness came.

The Holy Ghost fell on them, the Jews from Joppa and the Gentiles of Cæsarea. This was the testimony of the Holy Spirit that God treated Jews and Gentiles alike, and that, therefore, the Christians should so treat them. They all spoke with tongues (v. 46), and it is probable that there was the same visible manifestation of flaming tongues as on the day of Pentecost; for Peter in his report to the disciples at Jerusalem (Acts 11:15) says that the Holy Ghost fell on them "as on us at the beginning."

47. **Can any man forbid water** for the outward ceremony of baptism, since God had baptized them with the Holy Spirit?

48. **Commanded them to be baptized,** as the public profession of their faith in Jesus. It is not said that Peter baptized them; this may have been left to the disciples in Cæsarea, among which may have been Philip (Acts 8:40; 21:8), who would be able to confirm Peter's gospel, and foster this young Gentile church.

IV. THE QUESTION BEFORE THE CHURCH, 11:1-18. Such a radical departure from Jewish custom would naturally be criticised by the Jewish Christians. "They that were of the circumcision" (v. 2) were not merely Jews, for all the disciples present were Jews, but a strict conservative party in the church who wished to retain all the laws and customs of Judaism, and graft upon those the rules and customs of the new faith. We now see the wisdom of Peter in taking with him the six disciples from Joppa. He took them also to Jerusalem, a fact which implies that

Peter's visit to Jerusalem was, at least in part, to defend his course in this matter, and to correct misapprehensions.

V. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS. It proved that the Christian church was not to be a mere Jewish sect ; that God so loved the *world*, not merely the Jews, that he sent his Son to die for them ; that God is the Father of all men, and that all men are brothers, whatever their race or creed ; and that the church should be broad enough to take into its fold all who truly repent of their sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

It was necessary that there should be a broadening of the church from a Jewish to a universal church, including Gentiles as well as Jews. How it could be done was to be the burning question of the day, and one which threatened to rend the church in twain as by an earthquake shock. Some ten or twelve years later, when Paul and Barnabas on their return from their first missionary tour reported that the Gentiles had in large numbers received with joy their word and accepted Christ as their Master and Lord, the whole matter was discussed at a conference at Jerusalem (Acts 15 : 1-31). Peter then told again the story of this visit to Cornelius and argued that if God had received them by giving unto them his Holy Spirit, why should they force them to obey the ritual law of the Jews as a condition of their reception into the Christian church. This, therefore, served in some measure as a precedent, and the decision was made which enabled the gospel to be preached throughout all the world, to every man, Jew or Gentile, bond or free.

If Peter had refused the summons to go to Cæsarea it is possible that the church would not have so soon extended its welcome to the Gentiles.

The Vision and the Summons

"The trance of golden afternoon
Lay on the Judean skies;
The trance of vision, like a swoon,
Sealed the Apostle's eyes.
Upon the roof he sat and saw
Angelic hands let down and draw
Again the mighty vessel full
Of birds and beasts innumerable.

"Had he sat still upon the roof
Wooing the vision long,
The Gentile world had missed the truth,
And Heaven one 'sweet new song.'
Souls might have perished in blind pain,
And the Lord Christ have died in vain
For them. He knew not what it meant,
But Peter rose and Peter went.

"O souls which sit in upper air,
Longing for heavenly sight,
Glimpses of truth all fleeting fair,
Set in unearthly light, —
Is there no knocking heard below,
For which you should arise and go,
Leaving this vision, and again
Bearing its message unto men?"

— Susan Coolidge.

VI. THE OVERCOMING OF PREJUDICE. The most important lesson for the most of us, from this account, is that prejudice has no place in the Christian church, or in the heart and life of the individual Christian. There will always be conservative and progressive elements in the church, and both are needed. Only it is necessary that both sides should distinguish between the great underlying principles and the manifold forms in which those principles are expressed. The one essential thing is a devout and holy life, a Christian character, pious deeds, and faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master. There may be great varieties in doctrines, in tastes, in amusements, in forms of worship, and yet the Christian life flourish. Some things are right at one time, but wrong at another.

The great World War is bringing men of different faiths together in worship. Some go so far as to say that denominationalism will be "scrapped" after the war is over, and the men now in the trenches are at home, managing the affairs of church and nation. Whatever we may think as to this extreme, we may be sure that *sectarianism* will be done away with. Uniformity may not be possible or wise, but unity must and will be universal, if we wish to retain in the churches those who have had so broadening an experience as our soldiers across the sea.

Another prejudice which will pass away is that against men of different races. The Italian working in our streets will no longer be a "Dago," an alien apart from our sympathy and national life. He will be one of our allies, one of those who fought in the trench by our side, perhaps wounded and lying in the same hospital. The colored race can no longer be despised by those who have seen their wonderful record for bravery, and their firm stand against temptation. The Chinamen in the United States uniform, fighting with the United States troops, give us a new idea of that

people. And the events which have been taking place in Palestine give us a new feeling for the Jew who may be restored to a place among the nations of the world.

The Jews of Christ's time were prejudiced to an extreme degree: they were the people of God, and all others were "heathen"; God loved them, but hated all other nations, — they needed just such incidents as the conversion of a representative of another, and hated, nation to convince them that God so loved the *world* that he gave his Son to save whosoever should call upon him in sincerity and in truth.

And the sooner we learn that all men are brothers, that the trouble and the sin of one man, or one nation, affects all the others, — the sooner shall we become integral parts of the kingdom of heaven.

LESSON VIII (21). — February 22.

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON. — Acts 12:1-19.

PRINT Acts 12:5-17.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, And delivereth them.* — Ps. 34:7.

Devotional Reading : Ps. 34 : 1-8.

Additional Material for Teachers : 2 Kings 6 : 8-17 ; Luke 22 : 39-46 ; Acts 16 : 25, 26 ; Phil. 4 : 6, 7 ; Heb. 1 : 14.

Primary Topic : HOW AN ANGEL HELPED PETER.

Lesson Material : Acts 12 : 1-17.

Memory Verse : I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me. Ps. 23 : 4.

Junior Topic : PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

Lesson Material : Acts 12 : 1-17.

Memory Verse : Acts 12 : 11.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : HOW PRAYER HELPS.

Additional Material : Matt. 7 : 7-11 ; Mark 9 : 28, 29 ; John 16 : 24 ; James 5 : 16.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THINGS WROUGHT BY PRAYER.

Additional Material : Same as for Teachers.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

We should all become familiar with the facts of this lesson, including some knowledge of Herod and the spirit of the times. But prayer — its qualities, value, and effects — is the most vital point of emphasis, graduated according to the age and religious development of the pupils.

If we can make our pupils realize that just ordinary, common Christians may go to their Lord with their common, ordinary petitions, and be heard, we shall have given them something, the value of which cannot be estimated. Prayer will then become practical, not theoretical.

While Primary and Junior Classes will spend the greater portion of the time on the story of the lesson, their attention should be drawn to the practical lesson that God protects His people; and let them see the quiet confidence of Peter as he sleeps in his prison cell — even on the eve of his trial.

Intermediate and Senior classes will learn how God will answer prayer in some *wise* way. Call attention to the fact that Peter did not expect to be released and note how peace under trouble is often the answer to a prayer for release.

Both young and old should take up the many instances of answer to prayer — both historical and in the experience of their own lives or those of their friends, and from these instances, learn what constitutes real answers to prayer.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The spring of A.D. 44. Martyrdom of James, March. Imprisonment of Peter, early in April. The Passover (at the time of our Easter) was April 1-8 in this year. Herod died the last of April, A.D. 44.

Place. — Jerusalem, the fortress of Antonia, and the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark.

Herod died at Cæsarea, his capital.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The family of the Herods.
The object of Herod in thus harassing the church.
Why was James martyred while Peter was delivered?
Roman prisons.
Angels and their relation to men.
For what did the Christians pray?
Did they show a lack of faith?
How God answers prayer.
Instances of answers to prayer in our own experience.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Deliverance of Peter.

- I. THE MARTYRDOM OF JAMES, vs. 1, 2.
- II. HEROD'S PLAN TO END PETER'S WORK, vs. 3, 4.
- III. A PRAYER MEETING EIGHT DAYS LONG, v. 5.
- IV. THE DELIVERANCE, vs. 6-19.
- V. HOW PRAYER HELPS.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

On *Herod*, see almost any of the *Bible Dictionaries*, and Josephus' *Antiquities*, Book 18, Chap. 6; 19:8, 9.

Commentaries on the Acts, and books on Peter enumerated in previous lessons. Whateley's *Good and Evil Angels*.

On *Prayer*, *The Practice of Prayer*, by Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, D.D. *Lessons in the School of Prayer*, by Dr. Arthur T. Pierson. *The Prayer that Teaches to Pray*, by Professor Dods. *Biederwolf's How Can God Answer Prayer? Illustrative Answers to Prayer*, by G. Campbell Morgan, etc.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

The trial of Faithful, in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. Keble's *Christian Year* has a poem on the Deliverance of Peter. So also has Mrs. Sigourney, J. S. B. Monsell (quoted in *The Poet's Bible*), J. D. Burns (quoted in Taylor's *Peter the Apostle*).

Whittier's "The Legend of St. Mark," and other poems about angels.

Longfellow's *Sandalphon*, the Angel of Prayer. Trench's *Poems*, "The Suppliant." Whittier's *The Prayer-seeker*.

THE LESSON IN ART.

St. Peter in Prison, by Lippi.
The Deliverance of Peter, Raphael,*
Memling, Warren,* Hilton,* Murillo,
Domenichino, Ribera, Allston.

I. THE MARTYRDOM OF JAMES, vs. 1, 2. Herod the King was Herod Agrippa I., who became king of all Palestine in A.D. 41, and reigned till the spring of A.D. 44. He was the grandson of Herod the Great, who slew the babes of Bethlehem, the nephew of Herod Antipas, who murdered John the Baptist, and the father of Herod Agrippa II., before whom Paul later made his noble defence. He was only part Jew, and part Edomite, and feared greatly lest the Jews hate him as they did his grandfather. He therefore took care to observe the minutiae of Jewish ceremonies, and to do whatever he could to please the Jews.

About that time was the time of the visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem, bringing help from the Antioch Christians in aid of the famine sufferers (Acts 11:27-30).

Herod now set himself to vex, "afflict," oppress, torment, certain of the church. He did all he could to injure the Christians, and to stop their progress.

2. James the brother of John, so called here to distinguish him from the James who was at the head of the church at Jerusalem. He was the son of Zebedee, one of the first disciples of Jesus, and with John and Peter one of the most favored and advanced of Jesus' followers. He, with John, was ambitious to be nearest Jesus in his kingdom, and felt sure that he could drink of the same cup of suffering as his Master (Matt. 20:20-24), and his death shows that he stood the test. It was probably his prominence and activity in the church that led Herod to select him as his first victim, and to kill him with the sword.

Illustration. John Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, has written an almost perfect picture of Herod, James, and these events, in his account of the trial of "Faithful" before "Lord Hategood," in "Vanity Fair." The picture of the trial and the names of the jury give a vivid illustration of the character of these men who were urging Herod to make this attempt to destroy the Christian church. "Faithful," like James, was slain with the sword, while "Christian," like Peter, was enabled to go his way.

Two Ways of Deliverance. "How different to the eye of sense the dealings of God with some of his servants, from his dealings with others. Those he gloriously delivers; these he appears to abandon to their foes; the three children are brought

5. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

forth altogether unscathed from the fiery furnace; the Maccabean martyrs perish in the flames; Peter is delivered from the sword of Herod, from that sword which has just been stained with James' blood. . . . But shall we then conclude that those God delivered, and these he did not deliver? Should we not rather say those were delivered openly, and in the face of the world — these as really delivered, however, their deliverance did not as manifestly appear." — *Trench*.

We do not know to what service God called James in that other world.

II. HEROD'S PLAN TO END PETER'S WORK, vs. 3, 4. St. Peter was a born leader. "His personality was attractive because of his naturalness, buoyancy, and vigor. His impetuosity, candor, freedom of speech, large and genial humanity appeal strongly to our hearts. . . .

"The career of Peter after the Ascension is the most striking evidence at once of his natural capacity, and of the transformation effected in him. He has become the Rock. He shows himself to be the natural leader of the new community, the most powerful and energetic member both in council and in act." — *Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

It was this great leader of the Christians, the marvellous preacher, the miracle-worker, full of courage, energy, and devotion, that Herod wished to slay, and thus strike a decisive blow at the church by destroying its ring-leader.

The clause **when he had apprehended him** (v. 4) implies that there was some delay and difficulty in accomplishing the arrest, and it was not till the Passover was at hand that Herod was able to put him in prison, "the military prison within the fortress of Antonia, which was also the residence of King Herod in Jerusalem." — *Rendall*. **Four quaternions of soldiers.** A quaternion is a band of four soldiers on guard at one time, two within, on each side of the prisoner, bound one to each of his arms with chains, a third posted outside the door, and a fourth in the passage leading to the outside gate. All this beside the prison doors and great iron gates, belonging to the strongest government on earth. Escape was humanly impossible. Peter had once escaped from the prison of the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:19), and they did not intend that he should get away again. **Intending after Easter,** more correctly "Passover," as in the Revisions, to bring him forth, to sentence him to death before the people. He would not execute him during the Passover festival, because that would offend the Jews whom he wished to please. Therefore there was a respite for a few days.

III. A PRAYER MEETING EIGHT DAYS LONG, v. 5. "In v. 5 there is a pitched battle. Read it; 'Peter therefore was kept in prison': there is one side of the fight; after the colon — 'but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.' Now for the shock of arms! Who wins? Prayer always wins." — *Joseph Parker*.

They would have acted as well as prayed, if there was anything they could do. But "man's extremity is God's opportunity." Prayer was the only weapon they could use. It was Herod with all the power of the Roman Empire, on one side, and the feeble church holding on by prayer to the almighty power of God, on the other.

"The members of the church were so numerous that they must have met in different companies." — *Hackett*. The central point of the meeting was the well-known house of **Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark** (v. 12). As the season of prayer lasted at least through the week of the Passover, there may have been a continual gathering at this place of the saints, while the individuals composing the meeting were changing. But at home, at business, — everywhere, — prayer was going up from their hearts as fragrance exhales from a rose wherever it is carried. It was the fervent, effectual prayer of righteous men, which availeth much.

"It is something after the fashion of those prayermeetings which used to be held in the cellar at Scrooby by the men who founded the commonwealth across the seas." — *Jowett*.

Illustration. "Could Herod have seen those saints upon their knees he might have exclaimed, as did Ethelred, the Saxon king, when he saw the monks of Bangor praying against him for the success of their countrymen: 'They have begun the fight against me. Attack them first.'" — *Professor Churchill*.

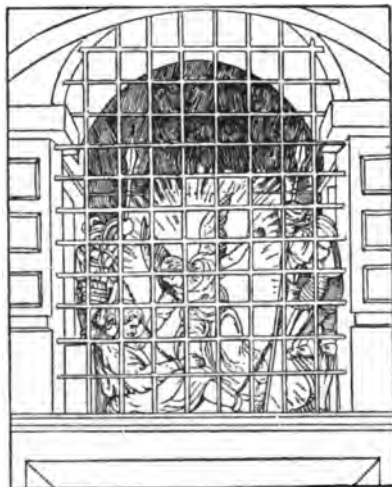
For What Did They Pray? We shall misunderstand their faith and their reception of the answer, unless we note for what they prayed. (1) Plainly it was first for

6. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

the release of Peter, if it was God's will. (2) In connection with a former imprisonment, they prayed "that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (Acts 4:29). So here they prayed that Peter might be sustained and strengthened and comforted. Perhaps the shadow of his former denial of his Lord made their prayer for him more intense. But they knew how unflinching he had been ever since, more true to Jesus than the needle to the pole.

(3) Most of all, that Christ's kingdom should prosper; and that all that came to Peter might in some wise way aid the cause dearer than life to him and to them.



Raphael.

Central Group from "The Deliverance of St. Peter,"
Fresco in the Stanza of Heliodorus, Vatican,
Rome.

This was a great crisis in the history of the church, as we can see if we consider what would have been left out of its history if Peter had died at this time. We know too little of what is best for ourselves or the cause to insist on any particular form of answer without the addition, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

IV. THE DELIVERANCE, vs. 6-10.

The same night. The night before his trial. "It is always darkest just before dawn." Peter was sleeping in conscious peace and trust in God. His peaceful sleep was the triumph of faith. It was in the last watch of the night, between three and six o'clock, for Peter was not missed at three, when the guards were changed nor until sunrise (v. 18) when the guards were changed again.

The (an) angel of the Lord came upon him, stood over him, with the notion of coming suddenly. "I believe that angels wait on us as truly as ever they waited on Abraham, or Jacob, or Moses, or Elijah, or Mary, or Jesus himself. The medieval painters were fond of filling the background of the Infancy with countless angels; the representation, though literally false,

was morally true. I believe that angels are still encamping around them that fear the Lord." — Geo. Dana Boardman, D.D.

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep!"

"O weary one; ye may not see
Your helpers in their downward flight;
Nor hear the sound of silver wings
Slow beating through the hush of night!" — Whittier.

And a light shined, — the natural effluence of angelic presence, a brilliant presence radiating light which filled the cell. Peter was sleeping so soundly that the light did not wake him, and the angel smote Peter on the side to rouse him. And raised him up, "awoke him," as in Revisions, not "assisted him to rise."

In the beautiful fancy of Keble, the wearied apostle, sleeping, as he thought, his last sleep, and dreaming of the glorious witness to his Lord he was to bear when the day dawned, would naturally mistake the angel's touch and voice for the summons to execution. See the poem in Keble's *Christian Year*, "St. Peter's Day."

His chains, that bound him to the sleeping soldiers, fell off, and he stood free. The angel commanded him to dress and follow him. Gird thyself. Bind thy tunic

8. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12. And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

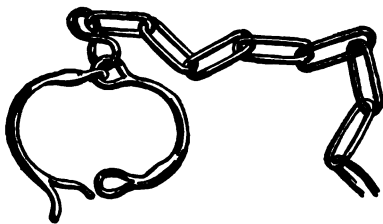
13. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

with thy girdle; the Orientals when they go to rest do not change their dress, but loosen their long flowing undergarment by removing the girdle. When they rise they fasten it again, so as not to impede the movements. Cast thy garment, the outer cloak or mantle. He would need all these articles, and the action showed him that the appearance was a reality, and not a dream.

10. **First and second ward.** Guard, sentinels, or guard-rooms. "The first ward might be the place without the cell where the other soldiers of the quaternion were on guard, and the second ward might refer to some other part of the prison or fortress Antonia where sentinels were stationed."

— *Knowing.* There must have been various gates and rooms for them to pass through.

The guards were probably sleeping. **The iron gate**, the outer gate of the fortress. Peter could not have opened this gate. **The angel departed**, having done his work;



Part of a Roman Chain.

Peter could now find his way alone.

11. **When Peter was come to himself.** All these things had been done in a semi-dazed condition. Now, in the cool outer air, in the familiar streets, he realized where he was. **Now I know.** He did not before know whether his Lord planned for him to die as a martyr or to live and preach the gospel. Now he understood.

Came to the house of Mary. He expected to find friends there, as it was probably here that the disciples were most frequently

gathered for their meetings. **Mark**, the author of the Gospel of Mark. John was his Hebrew name, and Mark (Marcus) his Latin name.

Peter knocked at the door of the gate, of the gateway, the passage leading from



Gate of the Prison of St. Peter.

14. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

16. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

17. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

the street to the inner court. Rhoda (Rose) was the name of the damsel who came to answer the call. When she recognized the voice of Peter, who doubtless had been a frequent visitor at Mary's house, she ran to report the good news that Peter was alive and at the door,—forgetting entirely to open the door that he might enter.

But the disciples could not believe that it was Peter. But as Peter continued to demand admittance, they opened the door. They were astonished, not at the fact of an answer, but at the strange way in which it came. "While their hearts are working so intensely on earth, God's hand is moving in heaven. Their prayer is travelling up one line, the answer is speeding down another. Suddenly a knock is heard at the porch, and, in a moment more, the beloved Peter is standing before them in mortal flesh and blood. They have received the very thing for which they have been praying." — *Professor Churchill.*

17. He, beckoning unto them with the hand, waving it up and down as a signal. In the confusion and tumult of their joy, they could not hear his story, unless they quieted into silence. James. The brother of our Lord (Gal. 1:19), and leading disciple in the church at Jerusalem. He departed, out of the house and possibly out of the city. He could not count on deliverance if he refused to use the means. But he lived many years after Herod was dead. See Acts 12:20-23.

"We cannot resist the unspeakably momentous conclusion that the human spirit is in close communion with an innumerable company of spiritual beings, less than God, but vastly superior to man . . . who act upon humanity as certainly and effectively as man acts upon the creatures beneath him." — *Professor Churchill.*

V. HOW PRAYER HELPS. 1. *The Comfort of Prayer.* "A woman in humble circumstances, the mother of four children, was suddenly bereft of her husband. She took up her burden with calmness and patience, toiling early and late that her children might obtain an education. A friend said to her one day, 'Do you never get tired or discouraged?' 'Oh, yes!' was the reply, 'but when I think I can go no farther, or

do no more, I go and rest in my easy chair.' 'Easy chair?' questioned her friend, looking around the bare room. 'Yes; would you like to see it? Come with me.' She led her into a small, scantily furnished bedroom, and, taking her by the hand, knelt by the bedside, and the toil-worn, burdened woman prayed as if she were



From Arch of Constantine.

Quaternion of Roman Soldiers.

face to face with God. Rising, she said: 'Now I feel rested and am ready for work again. Prayer is my easy chair.' There is no life so bare and destitute that it cannot have the easy chair of prayer." — *Record of Christian Work.*

The Outlook and the Uplook.

"When the outlook is dark try the uplook."
 These words hold a message of cheer;
 Be glad while repeating them over,
 And smile when the shadows appear.
 Above and beyond stands the Master;
 He sees what we do for His sake.
 He never will fail nor forsake us,
 'He knoweth the way that we take.'
 'When the outlook is dark try the uplook,' —
 The uplook of faith and good cheer,
 The love of the Father surrounds us,
 He knows when the shadows are near.
 Be brave, then, and keep the eyes lifted,
 And smile on the dreariest day.
 His smile will glow in the darkness;
 His light will illumine the way." — *Otterbein Monthly.*

2. *Things Wrought by Prayer.* We all can give some instances of answer to prayer from our own experience, or from the experience of our friends, or from the accounts we have read. Many an answer is a refusal because we do not know how to pray, or what to pray for; but there are very many cases in which we receive exactly what we pray for, in just the form we ask for. A young girl I knew well had for years a rather unusual success in finding things she or others thought were lost. Her secret was that in every case she prayed for help, and she almost always received it. If she was not to find the article lost she nearly always had that consciousness as she finished her prayer, and usually ceased looking for it. The answer came at once, and often in such a distinct way that she could recognize it as an answer.

But God does not always answer in this way. It is not so promised. We do not always "get whatever we want by praying, if we have faith." "I find no such warrant either in the promises of Scripture or in the age-long, world-wide experiences of praying men and women. Jesus had faith and in the Garden he prayed that the cup might pass from him. It did not pass — he drank it next day on the cross. Underlying every prayer must be the fervent desire that God's will should be done for and by the hearts that pray. And there are situations where God's will is accomplished by the refusal of some specific request as it could not be by the granting of it."

Stopping the Steamer. Drummond tells a story which illustrates the question of God's answer to prayer for temporal blessings in this world of natural law. "A large, splendidly equipped steamship sailed out from Liverpool for New York. Among the passengers were a little boy and girl, who were playing about the deck, when the boy lost his ball overboard. He immediately ran to the captain, and shouted: 'Stop the ship, my ball is overboard!' The captain smiled pleasantly, but said: 'Oh, no, my boy! I cannot stop the ship with all these people just to get a rubber ball.' The boy went away grumbling, and confided to the little girl that the captain didn't stop the ship because he couldn't. He believed the ship was wound up in some way in Liverpool, and she just had to run, night and day, until she ran down. A day or so afterwards, the children were playing on deck again, when the little girl dropped her doll down into the engine room, and she supposed it, too, had gone overboard. She said: 'I will run and ask the captain to stop the ship and get my dolly.' 'It's no use,' said the boy; 'he cannot do anything. I've tried him.' But the little girl ran on to the captain with her story and appeal. The captain came and peeked down into the engine room, and, seeing the doll, said: 'Just wait here a minute.' And while the ship went right on, he ran down the stairway, and brought up the little girl's doll, to her delight, and to the boy's amazement.

"The next day the cry rang out, 'Man overboard!' and immediately the bell rang in the engine room, by orders from the lever in the hands of the captain; the great ship stood still until boats were lowered and the life was rescued. Then she steamed on until she reached her wharf in New York. As soon as the ship was tied up, the captain went up town and bought the boy a better ball than the one he had

lost. Now, each of the three prayers was answered. The little girl received her request without stopping the ship; the little boy, by a little waiting, received his also; and yet for sufficient reason the ship was stopped by a part of the machinery itself, not as an after-thought, but something put into the ship when it was made."

— *The Bible Record.*

We Must Learn What to Pray for, and we must remember that God will never give us in answer to prayer what we ought to win for ourselves by our own work. An earthly father, or a teacher in school, will not, if wise, do everything for the child, but expect him to do his best before he receives aid. Our heavenly Father is far wiser than any earthly father can be, and will often for our own good refuse to grant such a prayer.

Illustration. "I once knew a little girl who did not like to study. But, because she knew that she must pass her school work, study she did, with a smoldering resentment. And then one day in Sunday School she found the solution to her difficulties. For her teacher said, 'If we ask God to help us he will. If we pray to him for assistance. . . .'"

"Before her next examination the little girl did not study. Instead of learning her lesson she knelt down and prayed to God, asking him to see that she passed her tests. Of course she failed. She failed rather miserably. For she had left everything, quite lazily, in the hands of God without even attempting to do her part. If she had asked God to help her and had done her best to learn her lesson, the prayer would have been worth something.

"We must not be like a child who, unreasoning, prays to pass her examinations and then doesn't study. By neglecting to do our part we may fail in an emergency just as utterly as the little girl failed.

"Store up useful knowledge and strength and helpfulness. If you do that you will also be building up a firm character — and will power. And you will find, when the time comes, that it's the reserve character and will-power that can make the average person rise up, supreme, to face any emergency." — *Margaret E. Sangster.*

"In this 'time of trouble' that seems to be enveloping the whole world we may well remember the words of Phillips Brooks, in a sermon which the writer heard him preach more than twenty-five years ago.

"Oh, do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life that has come to you by the grace of God."

— *The Christian.*

Prayer and God's Will. "A man stands in the bow of the boat and draws upon a line attached to the shore. His pull does not move the solid ground one hair's breadth, but it does move his boat towards the land. So when I attach the line of my desire fast to the everlasting throne, faith does not expect to move the throne, but to draw me closer to it, and when I get more and more into harmony with God I receive what my heart most desires. Finding my happiness in Christ I am satisfied."

— *Dr. Bushnell.*

HELPFUL MESSAGES FROM GOD IN TIME OF NEED.

(Study each reference and tell the story.)

Ps. 34 : 17, — The angel of Jehovah . . . delivereth them.

2 Kings 6 : 16, — They that be with us are more than they that be with them.

Dan. 6 : 22, — God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths.

Luke 22 : 42, — There appeared an angel . . . strengthening him.

Acts 16 : 26, — There was a great earthquake . . . all the doors were opened.

Matt. 7 : 7, — Ask, and it shall be given you.

Mark 9 : 29, — This . . . can come forth . . . by prayer.

John 16 : 24, — Ask, and ye shall receive.

Phil. 4 : 6, 7, — By prayer . . . let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God . . . shall keep your hearts.

James 5 : 16, — The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

LESSON IX (22). — February 29.

PETER WRITES ABOUT CHRISTIAN LIVING. —

I Peter 2:1-5, 11, 12, 19-25.

(May be used with Temperance Applications.)

GOLDEN TEXT. — *He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked.* — I JOHN 2:6.

Devotional Reading : Matt. 5:1-10.

Additional Material for Teachers : I Peter.

Primary Topic : DOING AS JESUS DID.

Lesson Material : I Peter 2:21-24.

Story Material : I Sam. 26.

Memory Verse : Christ also pleased not himself. Rom. 12:3.

Junior Topic : HOW TO TREAT THOSE WHO WRONG US.

Lesson Material : I Peter 2:19-24.

Story Material : I Sam. 26.

Memory Verses : Luke 6:27, 28.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE NOBILITY OF PATIENCE.

Additional Material : Job 2:7-10; James 1:4; I Peter 3:17, 18; 4:12-16.

Topic for Young People and Adults : IDEALS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING.

Additional Material : Rom. 12:17-21; I Peter 4:1-5:11.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

Patience — both towards those who wrong us and towards those who do evil — should be the keynote of all teaching, varied according to the ages of the pupils. In all grades, stress may be laid on the patience of God with erring man — the model for man's patience with his fellows.

Questions of authorship and date may be discussed when comparing and contrasting the Peter as seen in the Gospels and Acts with the Peter revealed in this Epistle.

Let the **Primary classes** take as the motto for their study their memory verse. Show them that the way to do as Jesus did is to always do what is right, and kind to others, even if it is not what pleases us most. The story of David and Saul can be used as an illustration of the motto.

The **Juniors** should enlarge their study by noting what Jesus did when men spoke against Him, and when they sent Him to be crucified; and make the application of how to treat those who wrong them.

The **Intermediate and Senior grades** can lay stress on the quality of patience as seen in parents and teachers; as seen in their own comrades; how impatience lessens our respect and accomplishes less; and can begin to learn of the infinite patience of Christ.

Adults and Seniors can broaden the scope of their application and study the

ideal life, — are there any who live such lives? Is the world in any degree approaching it? What changes must come into the world if it is to follow the Perfect Pattern, the real Ideal Life?

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The last mention of Peter in the Acts was at the Council at Jerusalem in A.D. 50 (Acts 15:7), six years after his rescue from Herod's prison (our last lesson).

His death was probably during the persecutions by Nero at Rome about A.D. 67 and 68. The persecutions began in A.D. 64, and continued until Nero's death in A.D. 68.

The date of writing this Epistle is variously estimated. The most of the authorities, however, agree that it was written between A.D. 62 and 67, perhaps A.D. 64 or 65.

Place. — Peter was a missionary in various places. This Epistle was written to the Christians of Asia Minor from "Babylon," whether the city on the Euphrates or Rome under a mystical name, is not certain.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on I Peter, such as The Expositor's Greek Testament; The

Cambridge Bible, by Plumptre; Dummelow's *One-volume Commentary*; *The Expositor's Bible*.

First Epistle of Peter, by Dr. F. Rawson Lumby. *Tried by Fire*; the *First Epistle of Peter*, by Rev. F. B. Meyer of London.

The Apostle Peter and His Letters, by Dr. Green. *St. Peter the Apostle of Asia*, by W. S. Auchincloss. *The Apostle Peter*, by W. H. G. Thomas.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The division of the Acts after chapter 12.

Peter's missionary work: where?

Authenticity of the Epistle.

Persecutions under Nero.

What was the true cause of the persecution of Christians?

The characteristics of this Epistle.

Comparison of the Peter of the Gospels, of the Acts, and of this Epistle.

What is the keynote of the Epistle?

How far should we be patient with evildoers?

Does patience with evildoers mean no punishment? The patience of God with man: an example and a model.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: Christian Counsels.

- I. PETER THE APOSTLE, AND HIS EPISTLE.
- II. THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE, vs. 1-5.
- III. ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS, vs. 11, 12.
Temperance Applications.
- IV. PATIENCE UNDER PERSECUTION, vs. 19-25.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

On this period of history, see Farrar's *Darkness and Dawn*, and his *Early Days of Christianity*; *The Church in the Roman Empire*, by Prof. W. M. Ramsay. *Peter in the Firelight*, by Rev. William Allen Knight. *The Call of the Heights*, by Stephen A. Norton.

I. PETER THE APOSTLE, AND HIS EPISTLE. With our last lesson we came to the division line of the Acts. After the 12th chapter the Book of the Acts is chiefly the report of the work of Paul, and his co-workers. Up to this time the Christian religion was spreading rapidly, but principally throughout Palestine and its vicinity. The church at Antioch had become strong, and it had been decided that Gentile Christians could unite in one loving body with the Jewish Christians. The report at the end of chapter 12 is

The Word of God grew and multiplied.

Peter was probably employed for the most part in building up and completing the organization of Christian communities in Palestine and the adjoining districts. He traveled about preaching the Gospel, accompanied by his wife (1 Cor. 9:5), and visited Antioch in Syria certainly (Gal. 2:11). He is thought by many to have gone to Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12, and Eusebius). It is certainly possible that he went to the Far East, and that the Babylon of 1 Pet. 5:13 means the city by that name on the Euphrates. It may be considered as a settled point that he did not visit Rome before the last year of his life; but there is satisfactory evidence that he and Paul were the founders of the church at Rome, and suffered death in that city. The time and manner of the apostle's death are less certain. According to the early writers he suffered at or about the same time as Paul, and in the Neronian persecution, about A.D. 67, 68. All agree that he was crucified, a fate which Paul escaped because of his Roman citizenship.

The only writings which Peter left are this First Epistle of Peter, which has always been considered by the church as authentic, and the Second Epistle, which has been the subject of earnest controversy.

The Epistle of Peter. The date of this Epistle is variously estimated as from A.D. 58 to A.D. 80. The latter date supposes either that Peter did not write the Epistle, or that the tradition of his death at Rome under Nero was untrue. From the references to the Epistle to the Ephesians, which was written in A.D. 62 or 63, it is by most authorities considered to have been written after that time; and the majority put it between A.D. 64 and 67, probably 64 or 65.

The Purpose of the Epistle was to comfort and strengthen the Christians during a season of severe trial; to enforce the practical and spiritual duties involved in their Christian profession; and to remove all doubts as to the soundness and completeness of the Christian system.

"We see in this Epistle the true Peter, with his fervid mind and picturesque

1. WHEREFORE laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,
2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby :
3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.
4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,
5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

utterance, — his large charity and the open-handed magnanimity, which enabled him to embrace new truths. . . . One of its noblest features is its gentle, tolerant, comprehensive catholicity." — *Farrar*.

"This Epistle was the child of many tears, and of much sorrow. It was written when the followers of Jesus of Nazareth were regarded with growing dislike, whilst clouds of suffering and persecution were passing over the people of God (4 : 17). The disciples had already begun to learn by bitter experience that they were to follow the Master's steps by way of the *Via Dolorosa* to the light of the Resurrection morn. They needed comfort ; a stimulus to patience ; a recital of the arguments for heroic endurance — all of which the Spirit of God supplied through these fervid and persuasive paragraphs.

"To a student of the earlier life of the Apostle Peter it would have seemed in the highest degree unlikely that one so impulsive, so rough-handed, so fond of action, should have been selected to write some of the tenderest and most consolatory words that have ever fallen on the ears of suffering and persecuted saints . . . so sweetened and softened, so humble and tender, as to afford a tropic soil for the luxuriant growth of the balsam and spicery of Divine Comfort." — *F. B. Meyer*.

Peter's letter was written to show those who had become Christians how they should live and act in the midst of heathen persecutors, haters of Christ and his religion.

- They must be true and loyal to Jesus, come what may.
- They must put away all evil from their hearts and lives.
- They must cultivate and practise the good.
- They must submit to the authority of their rulers.
- They must be patient in persecution.
- They must be steadfast, casting all their care on Jesus.
- And they should receive the crown of glory.

"The aim of the letter was to confirm the readers in faith, patience, and hope amidst circumstances of great trial. Its burden is : Hold fast the blessed hope of a speedy deliverance from your sorrows and sufferings. The encouragement which the author constantly urges is that since Christ has suffered for us, we ought to be willing to suffer for his sake, and that the present sufferings of the Christian will be far outweighed by the heavenly blessedness which is soon to be his. Thus the theme of the epistle is the true Christian in suffering. The letter reflects a time when to be a Christian meant to brave contempt and to endure hardship. Its dominant thought is that as Jesus passed through suffering to his throne of power and glory, so the Christian must travel through the valley of trial and sorrow on his way to the celestial city ; *via crucis, via lucis*." — *Professor Stevens in Messages of the Apostles*.

II. THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE, vs. 1-5. The New Birth, through believing on Jesus Christ and consecrating themselves to Him, was but the beginning of their Christian life. They were only babes in Christ, and had much to learn and gain in the Christian life. Peter and all Christian teachers were training them, feeding them on the sincere milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby. And they had tasted that the Lord is gracious (v. 3).

Therefore, changing the figure, they must come to Christ as lively (Am. R. "living") stones, ready to be built into the spiritual house, which is being built on the one "chief corner stone" (v. 6) "elect, precious," a "stone of stumbling" to all who do not wish to obey his word, but the "head of the corner" to all that believe and trust him.

We here find a reminiscence of Christ's teaching recorded in Matt. 21 : 42 ;

11. Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Mark 12 : 10 ; Luke 20 : 17 ; the application to himself of Ps. 118 : 22 and Isa. 28 : 16. Peter had quoted this teaching before, in his speech to the Sanhedrin (Acts 4 : 11) and Paul also in Eph. 2 : 20, which was probably familiar to Peter before this time. It is natural that Peter should remember this teaching, since he himself had been named the Rock, and had been told that he should be one of the foundation stones of the spiritual kingdom which Jesus had come to this earth to found.

The Kingdom of God, whose particular representative on earth is the Church, is built upon the one great foundation, Jesus Christ. But each one of its members is a stone in the temple. If he is rough, unshaped, weak, just so far is the temple unsightly, unfinished, and unsafe. The Church is strong and beautiful only through the strength and beauty of every one of its members. But by the great and good providence of God, the foundation will ever stand sure and steadfast ; and Christ's strength will hold into the building many a stone that of itself is weak and unworthy, and hide many an unsightly spot.

These Christians must be "living" stones. The temple is a living temple. It is built upon a living foundation, not upon a dead Christ. All its members are alive in Christ, alive to good works, with a living faith which is strong enough to move mountains of difficulty out of the path to success.

III. ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS, vs. 11, 12. Peter says : I beseech you as **strangers and pilgrims** on this earth, as those who are to remain here but a short time, and whose permanent home, which they will soon reach, is in heaven, to **abstain from fleshly lusts**, the low desires of the unregenerate heart ; the evil, sensual, licentious ways of the heathen around them ; **which war against the soul**. No soul can be pure and clean when the body is sensual and evil. The body is the temporary home which must be kept pure and clean in order that the soul may be prepared for the spiritual house which it shall eternally inhabit in the heavens.

What were the evil things which the Christians must put away in order to belong to Christ ? Read the first verse of this second chapter.

All malice, "which is anger cooled down into double-distilled malignity, rejoicing in the misfortunes which come to others." — *Meyer*.

Guile, "the sin of Jacob, which broke the bond of brotherhood between him and Esau, and wrought so much misery in the whole of Jacob's family history."

Hypocrisies, "feigning to be what one is not," in order to deceive.

Envy, "a feeling of discontent or jealousy, or ill-will, in view of another's superiority, prosperity, or success."

All evil speakings against others. The test of this is (1) is it true ? (2) Will it injure another ? (3) Is it kind and loving ? (4) Is it necessary ?

It is very plain that many of their heathen neighbors would in time realize the difference between the Christians and the heathen who indulged in these evil things which the Christians had given up. They belonged in a different class from their enemies.

Note the good things which Peter names in this Epistle as those which the Christians have substituted for the evil things practised by the heathen around them.

"Jesus Christ, whom having not seen ye love," 1 : 8.

"Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," 1 : 8.

"Holy in all manner of conversation" (not speaking one to another, but their manner of life), 1 : 15.

"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (not terror, but the fear of God), 1 : 17.

"Born again, by the word of God," 1 : 23.

"A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," 2 : 9.

"Having your conversation [whole manner of life] honest [honorable] among the Gentiles" (here used in place of "heathen," for many of the Christians were "Gentiles"), 2 : 12.

(Find other points of the same kind in the Epistle.)

12. Whereas they, the Gentiles, speak against you as evildoers. Nearly all the persecution of the early Christians was ostensibly because of their evil practices.

Pliny and many other writers of the time accuse them of all sorts of evil deeds, many in good faith believing them guilty, and therefore dangerous to the state.

Accusations of the Christians. "Though they were the most harmless they were also the most hated and the most slandered of living men. . . . 'Nero,' says Tacitus, 'exposed to accusation, and tortured with the most exquisite penalties, a set of men detested for their enormities, whom the common people called "Christians." . . . The lordly disdain which prevented Tacitus from making any inquiry into the real views and character of the Christians is shown by the fact that he catches up the most baseless allegations against them. He talks of their doctrines as savage and shameful, when they breathed the very spirit of peace and purity. He charges them with being animated by a hatred of their kind, when their central tenet was a universal charity. . . . He believed that, though innocent of the charge of being turbulent incendiaries, on which they were tortured to death, they were yet a set of guilty and infamous sectaries, to be classed with the lowest dregs of Roman criminals." — *Farrar*.

Now through the good works of the Christians the Gentiles must be made to understand their real character. Those who looked upon the agonies of the tortured must have had at least a glimpse of the heroism and devotion of these people to their King, Jesus. Many saw enough to convince them of the truth of the Christian religion, and even in the fires of persecution the Church continued to grow.

What a wonder it would have been if the heathen persecutors could have seen the vision John saw of those "which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7: 14).

The War against the Soul. In illustration of this read Bunyan's *Holy War*, a far less known book than his *Pilgrim's Progress*, yet worthy of greater familiarity than it enjoys. Here Diabolus, the Evil One, seeks to gain entrance to Mansoul, that he may reign over it himself. So long as there are no traitors within, the gates are strong, and the enemy cannot enter. But if a traitor opens Eye-gate, or Ear-gate, or any of the others to Diabolus' soldiers and emissaries, the entire city of Mansoul is in danger.

Another Illustration of the war for the soul of man is from that rare picture, The Game of Life, hanging in my study, and referred to in earlier editions of the Select Notes. It represents a young man playing a game of chess with Satan, for his soul. The game stands ill for the young man. "According to the representation and intention of the painter the young man was hopelessly checkmated. Despair was written on the young man's face, while the devil laughed in glee." But Paul Morphy, the world's champion chess player, after studying the conditions for a few minutes, "called for a chess board, and when he had arranged the men as given in the picture he remarked, 'I will take the young man's place and set him free.'"

It is when the champion of the world takes hold of the problem that lesser players are checkmated. Christ Jesus could deliver his people in all their conflicts with the powers of evil.

Every young person is living between Gal. 5: 19-21 and Gal. 5: 22, 23. There



Retzsch's Game of Life.

19. For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20. For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

is his battlefield. And it is absolutely necessary for him to live and strive with all his might and soul in Eph. 6:11-18. Jesus will give him the victory, if he strives faithfully.

Temperance Applications. 1. Intemperance is exactly the opposite of the process described in these two verses. It crucifies the spirit and lives according to the lusts of the flesh.

2. Here we have the cure for intemperance: *abstain*. It is only by subduing, not the appetite for drink alone, but all forms of sinful passions and desires, that we can conquer the appetite for drink. If we have not the mind that would conquer all, and if we yield to any degree to the fleshly lusts, there is not power enough to overcome any of them permanently. The others will gain ascendancy over the

spirit and make it weak to gain power over those from which it is seeking to be free. Hence it is usually only those reformed drunkards who become Christians who are permanently reformed.

3. Strong drink leads to all other "fleshly lusts." They flourish best under its influences. It weakens the will that would resist them, obscures the intellect, dulls the con-



Cadmus and the Dragon Depicted in "Tanglewood Tales."

The Dragon is intemperance. Cadmus is the representative of all those fighting evil.

science, and inflames the passions. While there are very bad men who do not use intoxicating liquor, and also many men who are besotted drunkards who yet never have committed any other crime, — it is still true that it is closely connected with crime, and many crimes would not be committed except under its influence.

"The drink problem would be beautifully solved if it were sufficient to drown all the old toppers (after obliging them to repent). But the trouble is that trade is worked up among the boys." — *Catholic World*.

But this country is getting to be a safer place for the boys.

IV. **PATIENCE UNDER PERSECUTION**, vs. 19-25. The Epistle was written in the midst of the Neronian persecution, which was the first great and continued persecution by the Roman power. In this connection it is most interesting to read the verses which come between our last topic and this one, — verses 13-18. In these verses Peter demands from the Christians obedience to lawful authority, even under the most difficult circumstances. "Submit yourself to every ordinance of man *for the Lord's sake*: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or to governors." "Honor all men. . . Honor the king," even the infamous Nero, in so far as he represents the supreme rule. "Servants," in this case meaning slaves, "be subject to your masters . . . to the froward."

"The slavery which existed everywhere throughout the Roman Empire was of a most oppressive character. The system permitted the grossest cruelties and brutality.

"The Apostles' teaching was, Be subject to your masters not through fear of punishment, but for conscience' sake. Your obligation does not depend on the treatment you receive. To harsh no less than to kind masters be obedient. It is your demeanor under cruel dealing, in your patience toward oppressive masters that your distinctively *Christian* character is shown. If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

"The Apostle, dwelling especially on patience under wrong, supports his exhortation by the example of the Saviour (vs. 21-23). The Apostle's mind is plainly dealing much on the great prediction of Messiah as a sufferer, which is contained in Isaiah 53. The motive to holy obedience divides itself into two parts: (1) the statement that Jesus died for our sins, — the supreme ground of gratitude and love; (2) the statement of his purpose in dying for us, namely that freed from sin's oppression we might be holy." — *Robert Johnstone, LL.B., D.D.*

He bare our sins in his own body . . . that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (v. 24).

For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing (v. 17).

The Neronian Persecutions. It will be interesting to study somewhat the persecutions through which the Christians were passing when Peter wrote this Epistle to strengthen and comfort them.

There were three great periods of persecution by the Roman authorities; those under the three emperors:

Nero, Emperor A.D. 54-68. Persecution A.D. 64-68.

Vespasian, Emperor A.D. 70, 71. Persecution during entire reign.

Domitian, Emperor A.D. 81-96. Continued general persecution during entire reign, sullied by almost or quite insane fury.

It is generally assumed that Peter perished under the first of these three persecutions, and that therefore this Epistle was written at that time.

There had been no great and continued persecution in Rome until on July 19, A.D. 64, in the tenth year of Nero's reign, "a fire broke out in shops full of inflammable materials which lined the valley between the Palatine and Cælian hills. For six days and seven nights it rolled in streams of resistless flame over the greater part of the city, licking up the palaces and temples of the gods which covered the low hills, and raging through whole streets of the wretched wooden tenements in which dwelt myriads of the poorer inhabitants who crowded the lower regions of Rome. When its course had been checked by the voluntary destruction of a vast mass of buildings which lay in its path, it broke out a second time, and raged for three days longer in the less crowded quarters of the city."

Nero the Emperor was charged with the guilt of this unparalleled outrage, and it was his deeds at this time "which seemed to throw a blood-red light over his whole character, and led men to look on him as the very incarnation of the world-power in its most demoniac aspect. . . . For Nero endeavored to fix the odious crime of having destroyed the capital of the world upon the most innocent and faithful of his subjects — upon the only subjects who offered heart-felt prayers on his behalf — the Roman Christians. They were the defenceless victims of this hor-



Vatican, Rome.

Bust of Nero.

rible charge." The historian Tacitus absolutely exonerates the Christians of "all complicity in the great crime; he distinctly says that they were made the scape-goats of a general indignation. The phrase—"a huge multitude"—is one of the few existing indications of the number of martyrs in the first persecution, and of the number of Christians in the Roman Church."

Tacitus emphasizes the fact that the Christians were guilty of many crimes and deserving of the worst punishments (see above). Public feeling condemned them as enemies of civilized society. Many of them were slaves. And yet he declares that they were absolutely innocent of the particular crime for which they were so awfully punished.

The historian adds to his account of this persecution "one casual but frightful sentence—a sentence which flings a dreadful light on the cruelty of Nero and the Roman mob. He adds, 'And various forms of mockery were added to enhance their dying agonies. Covered with the skins of wild beasts, they were doomed to die by the mangling of dogs, or by being nailed to crosses; or to be set on fire and burnt after twilight by way of nightly illumination. Nero offered his own gardens for this show, and gave a chariot race, mingling with the mob in the dress of a charioteer, or actually driving about among them. . . .' Fables must be made realities, and the criminal must gracefully transform his supreme agonies into amusements for the multitude by becoming a gladiator or a tragedian."—*From Farrar's Early Days of Christianity.*

The Death of Peter. Here we leave Peter in our study. He is supposed to have been executed by Nero in A.D. 66 (*Farrar*; who gives some legends in reference to Peter's death):

"During the Neronian persecution the Apostle is said to have yielded to the urgent requests of the Christians that he should escape from Rome; but when he had got a little beyond the Porta Capena he met the Lord carrying his cross, and asked him, 'Lord, whither goest thou?' (*Domine, quo vadis?*) 'I go to Rome,' said Jesus, 'to be crucified again for thee.' The Apostle, feeling the force of the gentle rebuke, turned back, and was imprisoned in the Tullianum. He there converted his jailer, miraculously causing a spring to burst out from the rocky floor for his baptism. On seeing his wife led to execution, he rejoiced at her 'journey homewards,' and, addressing her by name, called to her in a voice of cheerful encouragement, 'Oh, remember the Lord!' He was executed on the same day as St. Paul. They parted on the Ostian Road, and St. Peter was then led to the top of the Janiculum, where he was crucified, not in the ordinary position, but, by his own request, head downwards, because he held himself unworthy to die in the same manner as his Lord."

LESSON X (23).—March 7.

JOHN WRITES ABOUT CHRISTIAN LOVE.—1 John 4:7-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*—1 JOHN 4:11.

Devotional Reading: 1 Cor. 13.

Additional Material for Teachers: 1 John, 2 John, 3 John.

Primary Topic: LOVING ONE ANOTHER.

Lesson Material: Luke 10:25-37.

Memory Verse: Let us love one another. 1 John 4:7.

Junior Topic: LOVING GOD AND OUR NEIGHBORS.

Lesson Material: Luke 10:25-37; 1 John 4:7-11.

Memory Verses: Matt. 22:37-39.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: HOW TO SHOW LOVE FOR GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

Additional Material: 1 John 3:13-18.

Topic for Young People and Adults: CHRISTIAN LOVE REGENERATING SOCIETY.

Additional Material: 1 Cor. 13; Philemon.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

This is a lesson applicable to all grades and in nearly the same way. Matters relating to the Epistle itself may be touched on very lightly, but plan to concentrate on the duty and privilege of knowing, feeling, and interpreting to others the love of God; of letting its effects shine forth in our lives and in our dealings with other men.

The children will be interested in the story of the Good Samaritan and be led to see many ways in which they can show their love to all around them.

Those somewhat older can begin to learn the broader meaning of the word "neighbor."

Intermediates and Seniors will study the qualities of love, and how it displays itself; how it differs from what we know as "charity"; and our duty to love all men.

The Young People and Adults will make a very practical application to modern society. Show the result if love instead of rivalry were to be the foundation for social, national, or international relations.

THE ROUND TABLE.**FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.**

The Apostle John in his later years.

The character of John as shown in the Gospels and the Acts.

The character of John as seen in his Epistles.

How far is one the outgrowth and development of the other?

What is your definition of Love?

What is the relation between "God is Love" and the love of man to other men?

What are the necessary ingredients of Christian love?

How can Christian Love regenerate society?

PLAN OF THE LESSON.**SUBJECT: Love to God and to Man.**

- I. THE APOSTLE JOHN.
- II. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.
- III. A DEFINITION OF LOVE.
- IV. GOD IS LOVE, vs. 7-10, 16.
- V. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE, vs. 13-19; 1 Cor. 13.
- VI. HOW TO SHOW LOVE FOR GOD AND HIS PEOPLE, vs. 7, 11, 20, 21.
- VII. CHRISTIAN LOVE REGENERATING SOCIETY.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Farrar's *Messages of the Books. Studies in the Epistles of John*, by A. R. Cooke, D.D. Alexander in *The Expositor's Bible* on the Epistles of John. Professor Stevens on *The Johannine Theology*; "The Doctrine of Love." Prof. Henry Drummond, *The Greatest Thing in the World. Monday Club Sermons*, one on "Love to God and Man," by Rev. A. H. Currier. Prof. E. A. Park's *Sermon* on "God is Love." *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, by Prof. Shailer Mathews.

I. THE APOSTLE JOHN. We have this Quarter been studying the two friends and companions in the work of Christ,—Peter and John. In our last lesson we studied the writings of Peter, and his latter days. At this time his companion for many years was far away from Rome, making his headquarters in Ephesus.

You will recall that after Jesus had risen from the dead and restored Peter to his full apostleship, and foretold to him that he should die by crucifixion, Peter pointing to John "saith unto Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?"

"Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Peter was crucified about A.D. 67 or 68, two or three years before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70, which was the first fulfilment of the coming of Jesus, as he had foretold, when he said to his disciples before his death, "Verily I say unto you, that



The Apostle John.

Bida.

7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

For the destruction of Jerusalem made possible the rapid progress of the Christian religion, and opened a new era for the world.

John lived some thirty years or more after the death of Peter. He was no longer the Son of Thunder, but had grown in the depth of his love and of his spiritual power, as the years had passed.

It has been said that Whitefield's sermons did not attain their perfection till he had preached them forty times. Such was the growth of John, as is evidenced by the character of his Epistles.

II. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN. It was written at Ephesus, or in the Isle of Patmos, southwest of Ephesus. The place depends on the date of the Epistle, and its purpose. Dr. Alexander, in the *Expositor's Bible*, thinks that it was written at Ephesus, more as a treatise than a letter, and that it accompanied the Gospel of John. In that case it was written to no especial church or group of churches, but to the Christians in all places, and of all times.

The other opinion is that it was a letter written while John was in exile at Patmos, and addressed to the churches of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was at that time the most important. This city, where the Apostle made his home for many years, was a great city, and around him and under his charge were gathered the churches in six other cities of the Province of Asia named in the early chapters of the Revelation, — Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

The Keynote of the Epistle is Love: God is righteous; God is Light; God is Love.

The Object was that there might be fellowship in the Father and the Son; that their joy might be full. John does not argue, he testifies; he does not denounce error, he teaches the Truth. There is the kingdom of Satan — darkness, sin, death; and over against it is the kingdom of God, which is Light, Righteousness, Life.

He had arrived in that stage in which

"Love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security."

The fundamental theme of the Epistle is communion with the Father and the Son as the source of love to our brethren.

Thus the first two chapters are dominated by the melody of the grand utterance that God is Light.

"Holy Light, offspring of heaven firstborn,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate
Whose foundations who shall tell."

And since the Light of God is all-pervading, all-illuminating, therefore where ignorance, darkness, sin, and falsehood are, there God is not; and where God is there is truth, goodness, purity, love. Hence they who are in communion with God must of necessity be walking in the Light — in the light of sin forgiven, in the light of holiness sincerely loved, and ever more and more attained. — *From Canon Farrar, condensed.*

III. A DEFINITION OF LOVE. "The principle of sympathetic or pleasurable attraction in sentient and thinking beings; that feeling of predilection or solicitude for, or delight in, certain individuals or classes, principles, qualities or things, which excites desire or craving for the welfare, companionship, possession, enjoyment, or promotion of its object or objects; the yearning desire for what is thought to be best in any relation, or from any point of view. In its purest and most universal form, love is regarded in the highest conception of God as the essence of Divinity." — *The Century Dictionary.*

IV. GOD IS LOVE, vs. 7-10, 16. "'God is love,' the greatest sentence man ever uttered." — *Rev. J. Stalker, D.D.*

God is love, twice repeated in this exact form (vs. 8, 16) in the few verses of our printed lesson; and repeated in other forms in almost every verse.

"The word used for 'love' is one 'born within the bosom of revealed religion.'

9. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

It does not occur in any heathen writer. . . . This word was not applied to any former use, and could be appropriated to express this holy love of God. It is that disposition, that active moral energy, which manifests itself in beneficence and sacrifice for the good of others. . . . The apostle's statement is not to be weakened into 'God has love.' Were He other than perfect love, He would not be God; love is not a single attribute in God, it is the name for moral perfection." — *Rev. Alexander Ramsay, B.D., London.*

How do we know that God is Love?

The answer is, By what His love has done and is doing for mankind.

Dr. Spurgeon was riding with a friend one day when they noticed a weathervane on which was inscribed, God is Love. They asked, Is God's love so changeable as that? "No," was answered, "that means that whichever way the wind blows, God is Love."

Dr. Jowett gives a wonderful definition of the Grace of God: "Grace is the Divine energy of holiness issuing in the ministry of love in quest of the unlovely, and by the communication of itself converting the unlovely into the lovely."

No man has ever seen God. He sometimes seems far off, in times of trial, or sickness, or disappointment and sorrow, and sin. But the test of God's love is what his love has done and is doing. He does not make sickness, or crime, or war, or selfishness, or anything that contradicts his Love. His work for mankind is to help, to save, to make better, to overcome evil. We cannot understand the prevalence of evil and sorrow. We cannot understand how God could allow the great World War, with all its trouble, sorrow, pain, and sin. Only by the eye of Faith can we be sure that through it all God's Love is shining, and that some day we shall know why we have been led by this road. But of one thing we may be certain from the first, — that God is Love, and that that Love is caring for His world, even amidst these thick clouds. At last the clouds will pass away, and we shall see the sun, and be comforted.

It has been very helpful and comforting to note the way God has shown the fruits of His Love, all through the ages, as recorded in the Bible.

1. The Promises to Abraham.
2. The Deliverance from Egypt.
3. The Giving of the Law.
4. "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments" (Ex. 20 : 6).
5. "Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7 : 9).
6. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. 103 : 11-13).
7. The Restoration from the Babylonian Captivity.
8. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3 : 16).
9. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John 14 : 21).
10. The Resurrection of Jesus, the proof that we have an ever living Saviour and King.
11. The Giving of the Holy Spirit, transforming His people.
12. "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14 : 1-4).

13. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

These, and a multitude more, are proofs of God's love.
Not once has God's love failed ; not once has He wronged any one.

"O thou inspiring God
With some pure spark of thine all-conquering Love
Touch thou my heart,
That all my ways may prove
Thy strength which faileth never."

V. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE, vs. 13-19 ; 1 Cor. 13. How may we recognize it ? The one real test of love is what it does. In the vision of the celestial City we are shown the Tree of Life, bearing twelve manner of fruits. What those fruits are, that grow by the River of Life, will test the tree on which they grew.

In order to make clearer what are the fruits of Christian Love, we should turn to St. Paul's wonderful poem of Love, in 1 Corinthians 13, which gives the characteristics the sum of which makes the ideal of the brotherly love due from man to man ; the ideal of John as well as that of Paul himself.

"Love is a compound thing, Paul tells us. It is like light. As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors — red, and blue, and yellow, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow — so Paul passes this thing, love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the spectrum of love, the analysis of love. Will you notice what its elements are ? Will you notice that they have common names ; that they are virtues which we hear about every day ; that they are things which can be practised by every man in every place in life ; and how by a multitude of small things and ordinary virtues, the supreme thing, the *summum bonum*, is made up ?" — *Professor Drummond*.

"Love is an essential part of all virtues."

First Characteristic, Patience (v. 4). It "suffereth long." It is patient with the faults and provocation of others ; patient with the slow development of those we seek to make better. True love, as long as it lives, must be patient. When it ceases to be patient it ceases to be love.

Second Characteristic, Kindness (v. 4). It "is kind." Kindness is love at work, love in action. "The greatest thing," says some one, "a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of His other children."

Third Characteristic, Generosity (v. 4). It "envieth not." Selfishness, the opposite of love, is the soil in which envy grows. Envy is one of the meanest of sins, for

"Base envy withers at another's joy,
And hates that excellence it cannot reach."

Love is willing that others should be greater, more honored, more gifted than we, with no desire to pull them down. "Only one thing," according to Professor Drummond, "truly need the Christian envy — the large, rich, generous soul which 'envieth not.'"

"This describes the Christian gentleman, full of gentle courtesy and daily thoughtfulness, in small things as well as great ; in the family as well as to strangers ; to the poor and the weak." — *Professor Hodges of Cambridge*.

Fourth Characteristic, Humility (v. 4). It "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." It is not boastful, does not claim superiority, or seek admiration and applause, does not blow its own trumpet, as the Pharisees did when they gave alms. This is the outward display. The other is the inward disposition, puffed up with self-conceit as a soap bubble, large in size, but mostly wind. "Love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into

16. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19. We love him, because he first loved us.

positions which betray his incompetence." — *Marcus Dods*. The person who is puffed up is like a soap bubble, wonderfully beautiful in its radiant coloring, but a breath can make it collapse.

Fifth Characteristic, Courtesy (v. 5). It "doth not behave itself unseemly," with impropriety, bad taste, discourtesy. Most of our unseemly behavior grows from the root pride, and love is the foundation principle of all true politeness. "Courtesy is said to be love in little things. You know the meaning of the word 'gentleman.' It means a gentle man — a man who does things gently with love. And that is the whole art and mystery of it." — *Professor Drummond*.

Sixth Characteristic, Unselfishness (v. 5). It "seeketh not its own." It is not looking out for self first of all. It seeks to give more than to receive. It puts away all those sins which grow out of selfishness, as oppression, dishonesty, unrighteousness in business, disregarding, for the sake of any kind of personal gratification or advantage, the rights or the feelings of others. — *From Whately on Morals*.

Seventh Characteristic, Good Temper (v. 5). It "is not easily provoked," that is, exasperated, irritated, roused to anger. I have seen nothing better than Professor Drummond's words on this subject, only remembering that the evil is not in the "temper," but in the failure to control it. There are times when love can use the power of temper with great and necessary effect, but never bad temper, uncontrolled temper. "We are inclined to look upon bad temper as a very harmless weakness. We speak of it as a mere infirmity of nature, a family failing, a matter of temperament, not a thing to take into very serious account in estimating a man's character. The peculiarity of ill temper is that it is the vice of the virtuous. It is often the one blot on an otherwise noble character. . . .

"For embittering life, for breaking up communities, for destroying the most sacred relationships, for devastating homes, for withering up men and women, for taking the bloom off childhood, in short for sheer gratuitous misery-producing power, this influence stands alone. . . . There is really no place in heaven for a disposition like this. A man with such a mood could only make heaven miserable for all the people in it."

Eighth Characteristic, Guilelessness (v. 5). It "thinketh no evil" or as in Revisions, "taketh not account of evil," does not put it down on its book of account, is not suspicious, is not always looking for faults in others, or attributing evil motives to them. Love puts the best construction on the acts of others, and makes all possible allowances. "Love, instead of entering evil as a debt in its account book, voluntarily passes the sponge over what it endures." — *Godel*.

Ninth Characteristic, Sincerity (v. 6). It "rejoiceth not in iniquity," "iniquity," unrightness, moral evil of all kinds. It is not glad when others sin, hates to report the weaknesses and faults of others, refuses to seem good by depreciating others. On the contrary it "rejoiceth in the truth," is in sympathy with all that is true, rejoices whenever it can find a virtue or good deed in others, joys in the triumph of virtue.

THREE GATES OF GOLD.

"If you are tempted to reveal
A tale some one to you has told
About another, let it pass
Before you speak, three gates of gold.

"Three narrow gates — First, 'Is it true?'
Then, 'Is it needful?' In your mind
Give the truthful answer. And the third
Is last and narrower, 'Is it kind?'

"And if, to reach your lips at last
It passes through these gateways three,
Then you may tell the tale, nor fear
What the result of speech may be."

A Summary (vs. 7, 8). Love

1. "Beareth all things," is proof against reproaches, hardship, opposition, and persecution, even unto the end.

20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

2. "Believeth all things," has a trustful disposition, believes there is hidden good in every man.

3. "Hopeth all things," always looks forward to the triumph of good over evil, is never discouraged.

4. "Endureth all things," no obstacles can stop its work, no discouragements make it give up in despair.

5. "Never faileth," is eternal in its very nature.

The Source of Christian Love. It is the same as the source of all good things, material and spiritual. **Love is of God: and every one that loveth is born of God** (v. 7). **We love him, because he first loved us.** "Omit any object to the verb. . . . The spirit of love rules in our life because we have learned this holy art from God." — *Rev. Alexander Ramsay.* We love, because he first loved us.

The Negative of Love. **There is no fear in love** (v. 18). Where fear is, that is, in this place, terror, dread of a harsh master or ruler, there is not real love. The two are opposites, — we rule by love or by fear, never by the two together. Just so long as there is any fear, terror, there is not perfect love. **Fear hath torment.** Love never torments, never allows suffering that it can relieve, never causes suffering for its own sake.

We must distinguish here between "fear" with the meaning as used in the phrase "the fear of God," where it does not mean terror, and where it can never exclude love, and the fear which brings suffering in its train; the fear because of "the iron hand," "the mailed fist," the dread of ruthless power; which is the very opposite, in all respects, of love.

VI. HOW TO SHOW LOVE FOR GOD AND HIS PEOPLE, vs. 7, 10, 11, 20.

21. The first thing is to give our most heartfelt thanks to God because he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (v. 10). It is almost inconceivable what this world would have been without Jesus to reveal God to us, to be our Light that shineth in darkness; our Life, and the Light of men. Contrast what the heathen nations are and have been for ages with the Christian people in Christian lands.

In the words of Dr. Currier, in the *Monday Club Sermons*: "It may be impossible to love God as the almighty incomprehensible Creator, but it is quite possible to love him as represented in the person of Christ, walking among men, pitying their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, healing their diseases, weeping over their graves, removing their transgressions, bestowing on them the Holy Spirit, ever living and always with us, the same yesterday, today, and forever. This possibility is not a matter of speculation but of actual proof. Countless souls among the living and the dead have been able to say with the



Healing the Sick.

Hofmann.

apostle, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Multitudes have been willing to suffer and die for him. Love for him has been found the strongest incentive to duty,

a sufficient support under persecution and trial, the one supreme affection that could not be quenched."

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another (v. 11). Love is not only the "greatest thing in the world," and the best thing in the world, it is, also, in its fullness, the hardest thing in the world.

Love is a Growth. "The business of our lives is to have the virtues above described fitted into our characters. That is the supreme work to which we need to address ourselves in this world, to learn Love. Is not life full of opportunities for learning Love? Every man and woman, every day has a thousand of them. The world is not a playground; it is a schoolroom. Life is not a holiday, but an education. And the one eternal lesson for us all is *how better we can love.*"

"Life is the school in which we are being trained in love. There are lesson books from which we learn these different virtues, with Christ for our teacher, and all our days for school days."

"O Master, let me walk with thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

"Teach me thy patience; still with thee
In closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In love that triumphs over wrong.

"Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

"In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way;
In peace that only thou canst give,
With thee, O Master, let me live."

— *Washington Gladden, D.D.*

The Pearl at the Foot of the Cross. "There is an ancient legend that while Jesus was hanging on the cross the agony of the nails brought the tears, and that, as the hot salt drops rolled down his cheeks and fell to the ground, one of them turned into a shining pearl. After the removal of the body of Jesus, a disciple returning to the spot where his Master had been crucified, and in his grief throwing himself upon the ground, found when at length he arose that he had clasped within his hand a lustrous pearl. The disciple had the stone set in a plain gold band and always wore it.

"As the years went by, and the ring passed from hand to hand, it was noticed that whoever possessed the pearl grew kind and thoughtful, whatever his life may have been before, and so in time the stone was reputed to have the wondrous power of giving to whomsoever possessed it the spirit of unselfish love."

THE CLAY AND THE ROSE.

"A Persian fable says: One day
A wanderer found a lump of clay
So redolent of sweet perfume
Its odors scented all the room.
'What art thou?' was his quick demand
'Art thou some gem from Samarcand,
Or spikenard in this rude disguise,
Or other costly merchandise?'
'Nay: I am but a lump of clay.'

'Then whence this wondrous perfume — say!'
'Friend, if the secret I disclose,
I have been dwelling with the rose.'
Sweet parable! and will not those
Who love to dwell with Sharon's rose,
Distil sweet odors all around,
Though low and mean themselves are found?
Dear Lord, abide with us that we
May draw our perfume fresh from thee."

An Example of Love. "One day, when the horse of a good man in Massachusetts happened to stray into the road, a church neighbor put the animal into the public pound. Meeting the owner soon after, he told him what he had done, and added, 'If I catch him in the road after this, I'll do just so again.' 'Neighbor,' replied the other, 'a night or two ago I looked out of my window, and saw your cattle in my meadow, and I drove them out and shut them in your yard; and if ever I catch them there at any other time, I'll do it again.' The man was so struck with the reply that he at once took the horse out of the pound, and paid the charges himself." — *Charles Jerdon in Gospel Milk and Honey.*

"Somebody did a kind deed to-day;
Was it you?
Somebody sent a kind thought on its way;
Was it you?
Somebody helped an erring one's feet;
The path of virtue and truth to keep;
Was it you?"

VII. CHRISTIAN LOVE REGENERATING SOCIETY. God sent Jesus his Son from heaven to teach us how to live, how to help, how to save mankind. He taught man about heaven in order to help the world to be heavenly. He went about

doing good, as he wants us to do. He healed the sick, he cured demoniacs, he restored the lame, he opened the eyes of the blind, he was everywhere turning to righteousness and heaven the hearts of those he cured physically.

This has been the work of the Apostles, and all his Christian followers ; and will be to the end of time.

Whatever Jesus himself, and through those who believe in him as his loyal disciples, has done for the individual, is being done for society as a whole. Christians have their faces toward the dawn. The Christian world is growing better. The difference between Christian lands of to-day and their condition a hundred years ago is wonderful. There are still vast changes to be made before God's kingdom shall come on earth as it is in heaven. The opposition is still very strong. There are many who hate their brother instead of loving him ; and he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?

Professor Ramsay well writes this description of the love needed : " Love is the quality which Jesus meant, when he gave the order to love thy neighbor as thyself : it embraces the most comprehensive and strongest kind of good-will to all men, a deep and burning desire to seek after the progress of the race and the improvement and benefit of every individual with whom we are brought into relations ; it is entirely unselfish ; it develops the side of our own nature in which we can approximate nearest to the Divine nature, for it is the human counterpart of the feeling that God entertains to man."

" The dwellers on earth, with their discouragements and poverty and sins and sufferings and death, want a power to reach their souls, help them to think and feel, and live more nobly. Children of earth, they want to know they are children of God."

" Picture Love as a vigorous man, with clear head, pure heart, and cautious hand. You can win his ear, but cannot impose upon his judgment, or talk down his convictions. He is generous with his money, but sagacious in giving as in getting ; unambitious, but fearless if in office. The busy world has such, and is waiting for more. Have we not dreamed of a time when to manufacture, import, and distribute goods, to produce and handle wheat and coal, shall be counted sacred callings, ministering to the children of the heavenly Father, as divinely guided as the ravens feeding Elijah, or the prophet multiplying the widow's oil ? A time when the trade of politics shall be ennobled, till from President to village constable each official shall receive and use his authority as a solemn trust for his people ?

" Tell me, you men who are in the thick of it all, if the fierce competition, the pitiless crowding down of weak dealers by the strong, the gambling in the very necessities of life which goes under the name of speculation, if these are your own ideal of a true business ? Do they make life fair and noble and worth living ? If the lawyer could advise and plead to quench anger and reconcile enemies, as knowing that the great Christ was sitting Judge ; the editor utter his convictions and gather news, not easily provoked, rejoicing not in iniquity, but rejoicing in the truth, would not this be a happier world, truth flourish in our streets, and righteousness dwell in high places, every good cause getting more honor to itself ? Let us not shrink from taking the lesson into the Church." — *Dr. Currier.*

WHITTIER'S PRAYER.

"If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain would do;
Clothe with life the weak intent,

Let me be the thing I meant;
Let me find in thine employ
Peace that dearer is than joy;
Out of self to love be led,
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my nature's habitude."

NOW ABIDE FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.
BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

LESSON XI (24). — March 14.

JOHN ON THE ISLE OF PATMOS. — Revelation I.

PRINT Rev. 1:4-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and forever.* — HEB. 13:8.

Devotional Reading : Isaiah 6 : 1-8.

Additional Material for Teachers : John 21 : 20-25 ; Rev. 2 : 1-3 : 22.

Primary Topic : JESUS APPEARS TO JOHN ON A LONELY ISLAND.

Lesson Material : John 13 : 23-25 ; Rev. 1 : 1-20.

Memory Verse : I go to prepare a place for you. John 14 : 2.

Junior Topic : WHAT JOHN SAW AND HEARD ON PATMOS.

Lesson Material : Rev. 1 : 1-20 ; 5 : 1-14.

Memory Verses : Rev. 1 : 17, 18.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : A VISION OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST.

Additional Material : Rev. 4 : 1-5 : 14.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE GLORIFIED CHRIST THE CENTRE OF THE REVELATION.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

This lesson is peculiarly adapted to the purpose to present Christ to the pupils in his class. This is the duty of every true teacher, and faithful endeavor will have its reward.

Even the younger classes will learn with interest about the home to which some time Jesus will take us. What do you know about heaven? Who will be entitled to go there? What must we do now to be ready for this new home?

The Intermediate and Senior Classes should study the characteristics of the Holy City which make it the ideal home to which we all look forward. Some explanation of the imagery can be given, and some of the possibilities of making a heaven out of the earth during our mortal life.

The Young People and Adults should note what in the Book of Revelation is the permanent message. They should study the history of the times in which it was written, the purpose of its writing, and find from their study its deepest message to us in this era. Is there any near approach of the reign of Christ? Do not pay any great attention to doctrinal aspects of the Second Advent, etc., but make the lesson practical as to the influence of God and Christ now upon the life of the world.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

The Author.—Probably John the Apostle.

The Date.—Either in A.D. 60-68,

during the persecutions by Nero, or A.D. 81-96, during those by Domitian.

The Place of Writing.—The Isle of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea, 24 miles southwest of Asia Minor.

The Purpose.—To give aid and comfort to Christians in the midst of persecution and trial.

Character.—It is written somewhat in the form of a drama, picturing scenes on earth and in heaven. It is full of Oriental symbolism and imagery. In some measure it may be considered prophecy, but it is expressed in such symbolic language that the true explanation is difficult, and no explanation will satisfy every one.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Book of Revelation.

Other Apocalyptic literature in the Bible.

The condition of the Christians to whom it was written.

Why was it written in symbolic imagery?

Why is it especially appropriate as the last book in the Bible?

The Glorified Christ as portrayed in the Revelation.

The Seven Churches of Asia.

Are they examples of the churches of to-day? If so, how?

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

The Expositor's Greek Testament.
Palmer's *The Drama of the Apocalypse.*
Studies in the Apocalypse, by R. H. Charles, D.D. Phillips Brooks' *Sermons*, vol. 4, sermon 7. *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, by A. H. Ames, M.D., D.D. *The Expositor's Bible* on the book of Revelation, by Dr. Milligan. *The*

Westminster New Testament, by Rev. Alexander Ramsay. *Practical Commentary on Revelation*, by C. Anderson Scott, M.A.

Professor Ramsay's *Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*. Dr. F. E. Clark's *The Holy Land of Asia Minor*.

Prof. Shailer Mathews' small pamphlet, *Will Christ Come Again?*

The books on Revelation are very many; but a large proportion of them attempt to explain the symbolism in detail, and in so doing lose much of their value to the Sunday School teacher or scholar. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* on Revelation has some four pages of names of books on the subject.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : A Vision of the Glorified Christ.

- I. THE BOOK OF REVELATION.
- II. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK, 1 : 1-8.
- III. THE APOSTLE JOHN IN PATMOS, vs. 4, 9, 10g.
- IV. THE MESSAGE TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA, vs. 4, 10, 11; see chapters 2 and 3.
- V. JOHN'S VISION OF THE CHRIST, vs. 9-18.
- VI. THE GLORIFIED CHRIST THE CENTRE OF THE REVELATION.

I. THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION. ITS AUTHOR AND DATE. The author has, since antiquity, been supposed to be the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. There has recently been much discussion of the matter, most authorities crediting it to either John the Apostle or John the Presbyter. The discussion is of small value to a Sunday School class, as it lies mainly in literary criticism and the interpretation of the symbolism, and there are no conclusive arguments on either side.

The date of writing is also under discussion. It was formerly assigned to the time of Nero, A.D. 64-67; but for several reasons many modern scholars consider it to belong in the reign of Domitian, A.D. 81-96, when there was an equally bitter persecution of the Christians. For this there are several good arguments. The change in date does not, however, affect the question of authorship.

ITS LITERARY FORM. "If one of Shakespeare's plays were presented to-day so that preludes and contents, arguments and comments, visions, choruses, prologues and epilogues, ran straight along in ordinary prose paragraphs or verses, without any such ordering of the text as the modern reader is used to, and without the traditional modes of recitation which the ancients with their stronger memory enjoyed, it would indeed become Chaos.

"That is just what has befallen the Book of the Revelation of St. John.

"Not that it is in the fullest sense of the term a complete and well rounded drama like one of Shakespeare's plays. For it is not. Yet it is dramatic and has the dramatic element running through it." — *Frank Schell Ballentine*.

ITS PURPOSE. The Revelation was a message to the Christians who were in the midst of a terrible persecution. In the time of Domitian one who refused to worship the emperor was regarded as a traitor to Rome. The Christians "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." In the midst of these great and terrible scenes (such as we read daily in books and newspapers which told us of the awful conditions in the World War), the Christians of that day could see on the earth the reality indicated by the symbolic visions, — signs of famine, fire, scorpions, plagues, strange beasts, dragons, and the bottomless pit.

Then they were bidden to look up to heaven to the Morning Star, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb that was slain. The Christians who had been faithful even unto death, who had suffered great tribulations for the cause of Christ on earth, were transferred from earth to heaven. There their robes were "washed white in the blood of the Lamb," who went forth "conquering and to conquer." "And they sang a new song," of praise to Christ who had "redeemed them to God by his own blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation."

The book of the Revelation is the unveiling of the unseen spiritual world in order to give assurance and hope and faith to those who were being persecuted and martyred, by means of a vision of the souls of martyrs triumphant and living in heaven; and of the ever-living Christ, their Lord and King.

This glimpse into the unseen was given in the best possible form, in which the unseen reality was pictured before them in symbolic language far more vivid and

4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5. And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

real than any mere description could furnish, even if it were possible to give a true description of that other world. The symbolic language was used by the writer just as we use any secular language to express the spiritual truths we would make known.

Frequently the symbols cannot be put into picture form, any more than we could make a picture of Shakespeare's "Take arms against a sea of troubles," but each metaphor has a real meaning, and these meanings make good sense.

As we read the book the point of view continually changes from the familiar scenes of earth to their counterpart in heaven. We read of Christ on earth, and then see him in glory. We see the martyrs on earth, and directly we see them alive and triumphant in the other world. We see the Christians amid wars and famines and persecutions, and then we look up and hear their songs of praise. We do not understand the earthly conditions till we see the heavenly.

A Chart of the Revelation. In teaching the adult class in our Sunday School concerning the Book of Revelation I found that the subject was much clearer when I made a chart separating the scenes which depicted by symbols and figurative imagery what was taking place on the earth from those scenes which are represented as taking place in heaven amid songs of victory and redemption, and the glory of Jesus Christ our King. (See page 96.)

The Message of the Revelation was to the people of that time, but this did not prevent them from seeing far beyond, down the ages to the time of the completion of Christ's work on earth and the coming of the kingdom of heaven; just as we to-day in the midst of the conflict receive comfort and the assurance of faith and hope in the final triumph of Christianity, and the coming of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

The Book of Revelation is the only fitting close to the Bible as a whole. Nothing more perfect is conceivable or known in the literature of the world. Nothing could give such faith and hope and courage to us who after so many centuries are still in the midst of the conflict between good and evil; for the vision of the end of evil, and the triumph of the Gospel of Jesus can be seen from the Delectable Mountains, and we are drawing nearer to the answer to our Lord's prayer.

II. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK, 1: 1-8. The entire first chapter may be considered the introduction to the Book of Revelation; but the first eight verses are peculiarly such.

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, that of which he is both the source and the subject, which God gave unto him, God being the original source. Which must shortly come to pass. Not all came to pass at once; twice he refers to them as "things which shall be hereafter" (1: 19; 4: 1). The message referred to an era, not a single event, just as we say the year 1920 came on January 1. The era comes then, but not all the contents of the era.

4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia. Asia here means the Roman province of that name which bordered on the Ægean Sea; Asia Minor. In this province were the seven churches named in verse 11, Ephesus being the capital, and the most important of the seven.

John greets the seven churches with a benediction from him which is and which was, and which is to come, — that is, from the Eternal God; from the seven Spirits, or the sevenfold Spirit, the Holy Spirit; and from Jesus Christ (v. 5). These three are the Holy Trinity, three manifestations but One God.

Jesus was the faithful witness, showing forth the Father in all he did and said; the first begotten from the dead, the first who conquered death; and the prince of the kings of the earth, the "over-lord" to whom all earthly kings owe allegiance. This "attests the impression Jesus made of universal dignity and authority . . . of that spiritual kingdom of which he was the King." — *Anderson Scott*.

The great work of this prince was threefold: He loved us; he washed us from our sins by his own blood, by His sacrifice on the cross; and He hath made us kings

SCENES IN HEAVEN.							
The unseen world	The ever-living Jesus in his Resurrection Glory.	Victors crowned. Morning star; While Raiment. New name. Enthroned.	God on his throne. The Lion of Judah. The Lamb that was slain. Men, Angels. Creation join in the Songs of Redeeming Love.	Countless numbers of the Redeemed from Great Tribulations. Christianity a success.	The witness restored to life. New progress of the Gospel. Songs of Triumph.	The Faithful saints sing songs of Victory. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.	Christ Crucified, is overcoming the evil powers. Good is prevailing over Evil.
Chap. I	II, III	IV, V, VI	VII, VIII, IX	XI	XII, XIII, XIV	XVI, XVII	XIX, XX
The scenes on earth well-known.	Jesus in his Earthly life as in the Gospels	The Christian churches on earth; persecuted, in the imperfect, but striving upward.	The Seals. Conquest. War. Famine. Death. Persecution. Earthquake.	The Trumpets. Hail. Fire. Wormwood. Darkness. Locusts. Scorpions. Plagues.	The two Witnesses of the Gospel slain. War from the Bottomless Pit.	Persecutions. The Dragon. The Wild Beast. (civil power) The Wild Beast. (False Prophet) No. 66 — Rome. But the Gospel is Preached.	The 7 Bowls of Divine wrath against Evil 1. Pestilence. 2. Blood in the Sea. 3. Blood on the rivers. 4. Burning. 5. Darkness. 6. Drought. 7. Convulsions. To make men afraid to do wrong.
							The judgment Day. The Powers of Good have overcome the Powers of Evil.
							Both are one. The Celestial City God's kingdom has come.

THE LONG WARFARE.

SCENES ON EARTH.

THE FINAL VICTORY.

6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

[Am. R., "to be a kingdom"] and priests unto God (v. 6). The Christian believers formed an organized society distinct from the surrounding world, and exalted above it, in which they were consecrated to minister to others in spiritual service, and to sacrifice themselves for the good of their neighbor; that thus the spiritual life of the world might be built up as a spiritual temple to God the Father of all.

7. Behold he cometh, as foretold by Jesus when alive. "The idea of the visible coming of the Lord entered most deeply into the mental atmosphere of Christian believers." — *Palmer*. Every eye shall see him, even those which pierced him, who crucified him. And all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him (Am. R.).

I am Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, hence including the whole between.

III. THE APOSTLE JOHN IN PATMOS,

vs. 4, 9, 10 a. Patmos, the modern Patino, is one of a small group of islands in the Ægean Sea, 24 miles from the coast of Asia Minor, and about 60 miles southwest of the ancient site of Ephesus. To this island John was banished during the persecution of the Christians, for the testimony of Jesus Christ, and

could therefore justly claim close companionship with those other persecuted Christians to whom he was writing. Who also am your brother, one of the Christian brotherhood of martyrs, and companion in tribulation, . . . and in the patience of Jesus Christ. He had need of the same kind of patience as that by which Jesus endured his sufferings, for the long, dreary waiting for the persecutions to end; for he had come in his old age to one period of the severest Roman persecutions of the



Isle of Patmos and Surrounding Islands.

10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Christians, when the penalty of fidelity to Christ was death in the severest form, that is by fire or crucifixion.

10. He was in the Spirit, probably meaning in a state of trance; compare Acts 10: 10; 2 Cor. 12: 2, 4. On the Lord's day, the day made sacred for Christians of all time by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. There is here proof that the Christians celebrated that day, as do we, with worship and prayer to God and the Saviour. We do not know how early the day was substituted for the Jewish sabbath, but it is not likely that the Gentile Christians would celebrate the Jewish day, and in all probability the celebration of the Lord's day became a custom very early.

IV. THE MESSAGE TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA, vs. 4, 10, 11; see also chapters 2 and 3. While John was in the Spirit he heard a great voice as of a trumpet, as loud and distinct as a trumpet making a proclamation. The voice commanded him to write in a book, that is in a parchment roll, the ordinary form of books at that time, those visions which should now come to him. This book was to be sent unto the seven churches which are in Asia. It would be most interesting here to take a little time to read the message, which is given in chapters 2 and 3 following; and to learn a little about these churches. Our study must, however, be very brief. (A fuller account was given in 1916 *Select Notes*.)

The whole Book of Revelation was probably sent to each of these churches, and not merely the short message to each particular church. They were probably each the centre of a group of churches, the number seven being taken, not because there were only seven churches in the province, but because "seven being the number of completeness stood for them all, and indeed for the entire church of Christ. The number seven carries with it, moreover, the thought of unity."

1. Ephesus, the capital of the province, was the home of the Apostle John for many years. In this city was the great temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. See Acts 19. Paul had lived and worked there. Many good things clustered around this church.

But there was one weakness; while John was away in Patmos the church had lost its first love (Rev. 2: 1-6).

To him that overcometh, in such surroundings as these, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (2: 7).

Ephesus still exists, but is an insignificant village on a somewhat different site from the ancient city.

2. Smyrna contained the only church which in these messages received only praise from the Master. It was probably because the church was then poor, though rich in good works, and had suffered tribulation. They received the comforting words, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

He that overcometh, in the midst of such poverty and suffering, "shall not be hurt of the second death."

Smyrna "is the only city of the Seven which is to-day rich and prosperous." — Dr. F. E. Clark.

3. Pergamos, or Pergamum, was the city of "Satan's Seat," the site of a great temple in honor of the emperor of Rome, before whose statues the Christians were commanded on pain of death to offer sacrifice. There was much to praise, but there were also some things to blame.

To him that overcometh in these surroundings was to be given the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name, "the token of a character transformed and perfected, a name the full significance of which should be known only to him who was conscious of the transformation." — *Plumpre*.

Pergamos still exists as a flourishing town, though of less consequence than Smyrna.

4. Thyatira also received both praise and blame; a great evil was injuring the church, referred to as Jezebel. (See 1 Kings 16: 31, etc.)

To him that overcometh these insidious temptations there shall be given the

12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

Morning Star, the sign of a new and brighter day which is to conquer the darkness of sin and sorrow. And its faithful members shall with the almighty power of the Father conquer and bear rule over the powers of evil.

Thyatira also exists to-day, as the modern Ak-Hissar, which is a flourishing town.

5. Sardis was the buried city. It was the home of Midas and Croesus. It planned to be rich. The river Pactolus which flowed through it was renowned for its golden sands. Midas turned everything he touched to gold, and Croesus was famed as the richest king in the world. But it was conquered by Cyrus, and destroyed by earthquakes. After each of these catastrophes it slowly revived. Finally, however, its stronghold fell over and buried the city in one of the earthquakes which came upon it, and the city was buried for centuries.

Sardis was one of the only two churches who are condemned utterly, and without hope of pardon. And yet even here there were a few faithful.

He that overcometh in the midst of these most difficult conditions received the most beautiful and consoling message of any of the seven, — "he shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Sardis is dead.

6. Philadelphia, the City of the Open Door. This church together with Smyrna are the only ones which received no censure, and are the only ones which have continuously maintained the worship of Christ through all the centuries since these words were written. They had their troubles, but overcame them; Philadelphia endured siege after siege; starvation, massacre, almost annihilation. It was defended with heroic valor. The long valley was "the open door to Phrygia and all the region beyond, with its undeveloped peoples."

Him that overcometh in this church, "will I make a pillar in the temple of my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

Philadelphia, the modern Ala Shehr, is a prosperous town. There still exist there the remains of 24 churches.

7. Laodicea "became famous for its banking houses and millionaires." As with Sardis there was no praise given here. It was the "lukewarm" church, self-satisfied but not of value on any side. It is compared with lukewarm water, which is the most distasteful of drinks.

"The Laodicean church is the only one which is absolutely and wholly condemned." — *Ramsay*.

Yet there is expressed the hope that they may yet repent, overcome their blindness, and open the door to the Master.

To him that overcometh in the midst of this malarial atmosphere, this temptation to yield to this deadly drowsiness is, according to Plumptre, "the highest and most glorious of all the promises with which the Seven Messages end," — "I will give to him to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Laodicea is to-day "the most desolate and God-forsaken of all the seven cities." — *Dr. F. E. Clark*.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And let him that heareth study his own church, his own circle of believers, and see whether it belongs to one of these classes, — or to what proportion it so belongs. And let all take to themselves the message, — the praise and the blame, — and overcome, and win for themselves the glorious and comforting promises to those who overcome.

V. JOHN'S VISION OF THE CHRIST, vs. 9-18. John, being in exile in the island of Patmos, and being in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and hearing the voice which spoke in trumpet tones (see above), turned to see the voice that spoke, and had a wonderful vision of the glorified Jesus. He was doubtless meditating in his loneliness upon the glory of his Lord in heaven, and the contrasted fortunes of His church on earth. He passed into a state of spiritual ecstasy. Like Paul he "was caught up into the third heaven."

In studying this vision let us recall the fact, emphasized by Professor Moulton, that the figurative expressions are *symbols*, and not images. They cannot be pre-

13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14. His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

sented in pictorial form. Each particular symbol is an echo from the Old Testament, and is, as it were, the text for the presentation of one characteristic, and it is

the characteristic, not the symbol, that forms the picture.



Vision of St. John.

Carlo Dolci.

John first saw seven golden candlesticks, or more exactly, lamp-stands, representing the seven churches. It is the province of the church to give light to all around. The light is kindled by the Holy Spirit. They are light bearers, they are not themselves the light. They are gold tried in the fire, which was purifying the churches through their victories in the midst of persecution. They give forth the light of truth, the light of good works, of all the fruits of the Spirit. "Let your light

so shine among men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5 : 16).

13. In the midst of the seven candlesticks, actually present among the churches, was *one* like unto the Son of man. Better, as in Am. R., "a son of man." Like a human being, as Jesus was while on earth. *Clothed with a garment down to the foot.* The long loose robe worn by the high priest, "for glory and beauty," and belonging to royalty as well as to the priesthood. See Dan. 10 : 5. *A golden girdle.* Worn by priests and kings, and a symbol of power, strength, and free activity (Isa. 11 : 5 ; Eph. 6 : 14).

14. *His head and his hairs were white like wool.* White hairs, "the hoary head," is frequently a symbol of wisdom, in the Bible. Here is a symbol of eternal existence, "the mighty centre of two eternities"; wisdom of age and the purity and splendor of eternal youth. See Dan. 7 : 9 ; 10 : 6. *His eyes were as a flame of fire.* This is a symbol of the penetrating glance which sees through all shams and pretensions into the very soul of a man, and into the deepest mysteries. Nothing can escape the eye of God.

15. *His feet like unto fine* (R. V. "burnished") *brass.* In that white heat where the radiance is greatly increased, and its dazzling brightness almost insupportable. "These lightning figures represent the feet as moving with incredible swiftness."—*Fuller.* They indicate "the purity and fervor of the Lord's activity among his people."—*Professor Riddle.* They symbolize the Lord's omnipresence; he is able against all obstacles to go wherever he is needed, to overcome all enemies, and bring swift deliverance to his people.

His voice as the sound of many waters. Resounding, powerful, musical, and one that can be heard from afar—deep, grand, majestic, as the roar of the sea, or of a mighty fall of waters,—like the thunder of Niagara. It was the symbol of God's

16. And he had in his right hand seven stars : and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword : and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

voice through the Spirit, through conscience, through his word, — a voice that must be obeyed. It is a voice speaking in many ways ; a voice far-reaching, heard round the world ; pleasant and musical to those who desire to obey ; but terrible as the roar of breakers on a lee shore to the obstinately disobedient.

16. And he had in his hand seven stars. "Who hath meted out heaven with the span ?" (Isa. 40 : 12). Seven is the number of completeness ; *all* the stars are upheld by him ; his hand controls the destiny of the universe, your fortune, your joy, your sorrow. Here the stars represent "the angels of the seven churches" (v. 20) ; either the pastors or leaders of the churches, or their guardian angels. They are held in his right hand, the hand of power ; and in that hand is the nail-print, the proof that his control will ever be in love. And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. This sword is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit (Heb. 4 : 12). Before its flash John had seen the Roman soldiers fall backward in the garden (John 18 : 6). "Never man spake like this man" (John 7 : 46).

The Symbolisms. The value of many symbols ceases when we press them literally and do not rather feel them as splendid suggestions. We cannot make a picture of the glorified Christ from this description that will not spoil the impression we receive from John's words. For example, John's symbol used later, — "the lamb in the midst of the throne" is a magnificent suggestion — "the tenderness in the midst of the almightiness" (Mrs. Whitney) — but it is spoiled when we try to picture it exactly.

Falling at His Feet. 17. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. "Happy are we if we have fallen at his feet, dead to self and sin, for then we are risen with him in newness of life and can ever say, with Paul and John, 'Have I not seen the Lord ?'"

"It may be your lot has been cast in isolation and loneliness, far away from home and friends ; but with the Divine Visitor all the heavens break upon your sight with joy unspeakable and full of glory. You may have thought that your only companion was Tribulation, but when the Master comes he brings all heavenly beauty with him, and fills the horizon with the splendor of his presence.

"Jacob in desolate banishment, saw his Lord as the golden ladder to the skies. Stephen, stoned, beheld, like John, the heavens open and the Christ waiting to embrace his spirit. Isaiah, enraptured at the sight of the Lord, high and lifted up, cried out, 'Here am I ; send me' ; and Paul whispered, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?'"

"One can never be the same person after a view of his presence. Visions of him are not merely ecstatic moments of bliss, but, like the Transfiguration, they are for service in the valley among the multitudes. After John's Patmos vision, he penned the three Epistles, the fourth Gospel, and the crowning book of the Bible — Revelation. He has thereby exerted an influence as great as any other writer in the Holy Scriptures.

"Here is the supreme moment in the life of a human soul when we respond to his call, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' After worshiping and consecrating all at his feet, after hearing the sacred words from his loving lips, and after feeling his pierced hand upon the brow and resting our head upon his wounded breast, no wonder a new and glorious life begins, full of eternal years and heavenly fellowships." — *Rev. E. W. Caswell.*



Golden Candelstick.

From the Arch of Titus, Rome.

17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18. *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

He laid his right hand upon me, in gentle brotherly touch, to rouse him from his unconsciousness, with the words fear not.

18. I am he that liveth and was dead. I am the same Jesus you knew on earth; the one who was crucified, but now am alive forevermore. And I have the keys, the power over, the means of opening and shutting, of hell, Hades, the place of the dead; not the place of punishment in this place. And of death. He has the power to decide who shall go in and who shall be kept out. He has the power to preserve from death; to raise from the dead into immortal life.

VI. THE GLORIFIED CHRIST THE CENTRE OF THE REVELATION. He is not merely the centre, he is like the sun in the centre of the universe with its rays extending into every corner of it with life-giving force. It is interesting to study the chapters of the book with this question in mind, — to find out how much, and in what terms Christ is referred to. And it is the glorified Christ, not the suffering Christ; it is not only "the Lamb as it had been slain," but "the Lamb in the midst of the throne." He is "he that was dead," but also "he that is alive for evermore."

And in the new city which shall "come down from God out of heaven," was neither temple, nor light of the sun; for "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple"; and "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

And the greatest of all the glories is that "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him."

JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOREVER.

"O gracious Saviour! Thou art still the same:
Through all time's changeful scenes Thou changest not;
Thy promised help, Thy perfect peace, we claim,
When storm and strife surround our earthly lot.

"Wondrous Thy power displayed in days of old;
Wondrous Thy works of mercy here below;
From Calvary's Cross shines forth that love untold,
Which paid sin's debts, and saves from endless woe.

"Thou art the same! Thine all-atoning Blood
Avails to-day for every burdened soul.
Reveal Thyself, eternal Son of God!
Let sinners feel the touch which makes them whole.

"Through darksome hours, while pain and grief assail,
Lord Jesus, still support and cheer Thine own;
When tempests rage, when human helpers fail,
How blest the hearts that trust in Thee alone!

"Thou art the same to-day and all the days;
And till we rise to dwell with Thee above,
Our source of strength shall be Thy boundless grace,
Our perfect resting-place Thy changeless love."—*Gladys M. Phipps.*

LESSON XII (25). — March 21.

JOHN'S VISION OF WORSHIP IN HEAVEN. —

Revelation 7:9-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*—REV. 7:12.

Devotional Reading: Rev. 19:6-10.

Additional Material for Teachers: Rev. 4:1-5:14; 19:1-10.

Primary Topic: THE HEAVENLY HOME.

Lesson Material: John 14:1-6; Rev. 7:9-17; 21:1-5.

Memory Verse: In my Father's house are many mansions. John 14:2.

Junior Topic : A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN.

Lesson Material : Rev. 7:9-17.

Memory Verses : Rev. 7:16, 17.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : A VISION OF THE GLORIOUS FUTURE.

Additional Material : Rev. 19:1-9; 22:1-5.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE PERMANENT MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The time allowed in the study period is too short to discuss and explain the various symbols, figurative expressions and pictures contained in the text. But with the return of our boys from overseas, having risked all to make the world a better place, our thoughts are turning more readily to the City of God, eternal in the heavens, where there shall be no more sin against which to fight.

The world must be made worthy of the loss and sacrifice which has been poured out for it.

Our boys have learned many a lesson in the trenches, which will make them unwilling to live in a world of sham, of graft, of sin in high places, of narrowness and injustice.

There are those also who have fought and won in the battle of sin — these, too, are to be added to those who are to form a nucleus for the new City of God, be it in heaven in the dim future or on earth within our time, as the product of Christ-filled lives and devoted service and sacrifice.

The younger grades will find their greatest interest in the description of the scene. Impress upon their minds that a Christ such as is described has abundant power to help us, and great as He is, He loves us.

In the Intermediate and Senior grades it may be well to contrast the Jesus of the Gospels with this Glorified Christ and find forecasts of this glory in the Transfiguration and other events.

The Young People and Adults should make a general study of the book of Revelation, to find how all is grouped around the person of Christ, the Lamb that had been slain. Show how He is the centre of all and how by analogy, we can learn that He should be the centre of our lives and of the life of the world.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

The same as in the last lesson. This lesson carries the vision to heaven, where the saints who had been persecuted and slain on earth are shown as glorified,

dwelling in the world to come, with the angels of God, and with God and his Christ as ruler and King.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

How far can we look upon these descriptions as literal? Are they any less true because written in symbolic language?

Why was this form the best for revealing the truth? Could an actual picture of heaven be understood by men on earth?

How do these descriptions help us in our daily life? Heaven as an ideal.

Do we think too much about heaven?

Heaven as a help to a true life on earth.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Books on Revelation referred to in our last lesson.

Prof. Henry Drummond's *The City Without a Church*. Phillips Brooks' *Sermons*, "The Christian City"; "The Giant with the Wounded Heel"; and "The Sea of Glass Mingled with Fire." Dr. George A. Gordon's *The Land of Pure Delight*. Jeremy Taylor's *Heaven*. David Dickson's *The New Jerusalem*.

Henry van Dyke's *The Mansion*. Mrs. Oliphant's *Little Pilgrim*. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward's *The Gates Ajar*. There are many books of the type of these latter, each giving some view of the heavenly home, from the point of view of the author. Unless we accept them as actual pictures of the other world, they are of immense help to our thinking and feeling of the attractiveness of the mansions prepared for us in the Father's house.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Heavenly Home and Its Worship.

- I. THE VISION OF GOD'S REDEEMED, vs. 9-12.
- II. THE GREAT TRIBULATION, vs. 13, 14.
- III. THE REWARD OF THE FAITHFUL, vs. 15-17.
- IV. THE GLORIOUS FUTURE, Rev. 21, 22.
- V. THE PERMANENT MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

I. THE VISION OF GOD'S REDEEMED, vs. 9-12. "This vision was born in the heart of an exile. It glows in the eyes of a man who has been driven from all that was dear to him, because of his loyalty to his Lord. Men have often found their sight when they have lost their country. A larger discernment has come to them in the day of their penury and deprivation. . . . And so we listen at many a prison door to the noblest songs of liberty, and radiant visions have poured their glory into many a dark captivity, and turned its midnight into noon." — *Dr. John H. Jowett, D.D.*

The Innumerable Multitude. 9. A great multitude which no man could number. There is no limit to the number of the redeemed in Christ Jesus. There is no limit to the mansions in our Father's house. The servants of God have been passing from earth to the heavenly home ever since the beginning of the history of mankind, and yet there is room for all who will enter there; "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," which is the condition of citizenship in the Holy City of God.

Out of Every Race. 9. Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. There is not there a favored nation, a peculiar people. The Jews were separated from other nations on earth in order that they by that means might keep alive the worship of God, and so win to the heavenly life all other nations. But the Jew did not understand this view of his history. The barriers between him and all other nations were stiff and stubborn. "The Jewish nation was stiff and rigid in the pride of the elect. They practised a severe exclusiveness. Their prejudices were like coats of mail. They were girt about with a racial encasement far more invincible than the fierce terrors of iron-bound coasts. And yet this Jew, suffering the bitter pangs of exile, frees himself from all these limitations of race and caste and parochial religion, and willingly and gladly welcomes the vision of a 'multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.' I say, that the vision itself is marvelous, but the wonder is increased tenfold when we remember that the inspired seer is a Jew. . . ."

"We live in a time when racial differences are receiving perilous emphasis. Patriotism is bristling with fierce antagonisms. We are gazing upon widening gulfs of hatred and suspicion. And the air is thundering with threats of even sterner isolation. Well, I stand here in the Church of the living God, and over against this seething welter of antipathies I unfold another vision, the vision of the inspired Jew, a vision of races federated in a nobler union, each race preserving its essential genius, and each exerting its native function, and coöperating with all the others in the glorious harmony." — *Dr. Jowett (1917).*

The Bond of Union. 9. Before the throne of God, and before the Lamb. Whatever the differences there is one common likeness between all races on this earth, — all are the children of God; all have alike sinned, and been redeemed by the death of the only begotten Son of God. They are all subjects of the great King of kings and Lord of lords, and all the redeemed worship the same God and Saviour.

It is, in some ways, like our American nation, — the melting pot of the races of earth; composed of representatives of all nations, of all degrees of civilization and education, of all colors; but united as a whole in the one nation, America, in their desire for liberty and a popular government.

In some other ways it is like the great British Empire, with all the different races under its control, — speaking different tongues, with far different customs and habits; divided by the great oceans, physically, and by far greater barriers, mentally and spiritually. Yet they have proved themselves one nation, loyal to the central throne of the Empire, and the principles for which the British Empire stands.

These are inadequate and earthly comparisons; yet they have in them a germ of the truth. God is the Father, the King, of all men; and all men are brothers. And when we reach that heavenly country earth's limitations will fall away; earth's quarrels will seem far and futile, and there finally, will be fulfilled the dream of many on this earth, — the universal brotherhood, irrespective of race, color, customs, or creed.

10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12. Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

This multitude was clothed with white robes, showing their purity, their freedom from sin, their redemption by the blood of Christ. They had palms in their hands, as emblems of victory over sin and trouble in the world from which they had come.

WORSHIP IN HEAVEN. 1. *It is Universal.* "The four beasts," "the four and twenty elders," the "many angels round about the throne . . . ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," "and every creature that is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," and the "great multitude which no man could number," — all are worshipping God in universal harmony (Rev. 5:8, 11, 13; 7:9, 10).

2. *It is Continual.* "They rest not day and night," "they serve him day and night in his temple" (Rev. 4:8; 7:15). Eternity itself is not long enough to render thanks for all that our Father has done for us.

3. *It is Praise rather than Petition.* Faith has been transformed into sight; they have fought the good fight, and have received their reward. Henceforth it is their duty and pleasure to sing the praises of Him who bought them and redeemed them to God out of every nation under heaven.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power" (4:11). "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (5:12). "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 7:12).

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9, 10).

"WORTHY THE LAMB!"

"Worthy the Lamb to interpret the pages
Writ with the Trinity's counsels sublime;
Worthy to open the seals that for ages
Shrouded the destinies future of time:
Worthy to take the book,
Worthy thereon to look,
Worthy the name he took,
Worthy forever the Lamb that was slain.

"Worthy the Lamb that was slain to redeem us,
Washing our sins in his pardoning blood;
Worthy the Lamb who has deigned to esteem us,
Making us kings and us priests unto God:
Worthy angelic lays,
Worthy redemption's lays,
Worthy in all his ways,
Worthy forever the Lamb that was slain.

"Worthy the Lamb who from every nation,
Out of each kindred and people and tongue,
Gathered and loved us and gave us salvation,
Worthy the anthem adoringly sung:
Worthy the crown to own,
Worthy of heaven's throne,
Worthy all homage shown,
Worthy forever the Lamb that was slain.

"Worthy the Lamb his dominion possessing,
Worthy of riches and wisdom and strength;
Worthy of honor and glory and blessing,
Worthy the highest hosannas at length:
Worthy the choral strain,
Worthy the new refrain,
Worthy to rule and reign,
Worthy forever the Lamb that was slain."

—Oliver Crane.

II. THE GREAT TRIBULATION, vs. 13, 14. These are they which came out of great tribulation. This without doubt refers to the persecutions of the Christians, either under Nero or under Domitian (see Lesson IX). We cannot fully understand the picture until we study what had been taking place on earth to prepare them and train them for whatever work God had for them to do in heaven. We have no easily

15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

read description of events in the reign of Domitian; but Farrar's description of those in the time of Nero is good for descriptions of either of these persecutions.

On earth these same glorified and rejoicing saints had perished "for the word of God and for the testimony which they held," some at Jerusalem, some in the provinces, but most of all in the Neronian persecution at Rome. They are impatiently appealing for vengeance and judgment. Hero after hero had fallen in the Christian warfare. Apostle after Apostle had been sent to his dreadful martyrdom. St. Peter had been crucified; St. Paul beheaded; St. James the elder beheaded; St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, hurled down and beaten to death; hundreds of others burnt, or tortured, or torn to pieces in the gardens of Nero and in the Roman circus; yet no deliverer flashed from the morning clouds. How long, O Lord, how long! . . .

"White robes are given them, and they are bidden to wait till the number of the martyrs is complete, till their brethren who are still on earth shall have fulfilled their course. . . .

"Meanwhile the fire of olden prophecy was rekindled for their inspiration, and they found that the more they were trodden down the more did they feel the conviction of glorious triumph and the exultation of inward peace. They who have an invisible King to sustain them, and a John to utter His messages, may brave the banded forces of secular despotism and religious hatred — and may stand undismayed between a Zealot-maddened Jerusalem and a Neronian Rome. . . .

"The whole company are 'the elect gathered together from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' " — *Farrar*.

"*The Giant with the Wounded Heel.*" A sermon with this title by Bishop Phillips Brooks gives a picture of the relation of persecution, tribulation, to the final victory over sin and evil. He takes the text Gen. 3:15, — "And I [the Lord] will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it [the seed of the woman] shall bruise thy head, and thou [Satan] shalt bruise his heel."

"Life throws light on the story, and the story throws light on the life. . . . Let us hold it in the light of life, and see its meaning brighten and deepen."

God is represented as speaking to the serpent, the tempter of mankind, the spirit of evil. He is everywhere, then, and always. What does God say? There shall be a long, terrible fight between man and the power of evil; the power of evil shall hunt and persecute man, cripple him, vex him, hinder him, and make him suffer. It shall bruise his heel. But it shall not kill him; at last man shall bruise the serpent's head, shall utterly destroy evil, put it out of existence.

"Look at the great Institutions! What do we see? Noble principles, vast beneficent agencies, gradually conquering barbarism and misery, making men better, happier; but stung in the heel by the serpents of selfishness, and sordidness, and insincerity and narrowness; just the picture of the Giant with the Wounded Heel. The serpent is stinging at the heel which must ultimately be set upon the serpent's head, and crush it.

"The work of the religious life will be done, but under perpetual opposition, done with torn and bleeding hands and feet."

III. **THE REWARD OF THE FAITHFUL**, vs. 15-17. Notice what is given as the first of these rewards, — **Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.** The reward of faithfulness in the parables was a larger duty, — "thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matt. 25:21). The reward of persecution for worshipping God was the opportunity to worship him in security; the reward for serving him even unto death on the earth was the right and the power to serve him continually in heaven.

He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. The God for whom they suffered and gave their lives will not hold himself aloof, but make his home with them in intimate companionship, — "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

16. **They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more**, the two most common causes of suffering in this world. They shall have none of the earthly sufferings, "for they shall be filled"; they "shall be satisfied," with "all the fulness of Christ."

Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. This was written to the people of a warm country, and must be read with that fact in mind. Heat in a cold country is beneficent; an over amount of heat in a warm country means death, as is the case even in temperate lands during the hot season. All the descriptions of heaven we must read with a realization of the feelings of the ancients. Thus, "no more sea," was understandable by those whose best ships were only fitted for pleasant weather sailing; who never attempted winter voyages even on the comparatively calm Mediterranean Sea. It does not mean that the beauty and glory of the sea as we know it shall be lacking in our heavenly home.

17. **The Lamb . . . shall feed them.** The Master in whose service they suffered and died shall provide for all their wants. **And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.** "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Rev. 21:4).

"Every image that denotes the purest joy is introduced into this description of the ultimate blessedness of the redeemed. They are clad in white, the wedding garments of a great festivity. Music is the natural utterance of their delight. Nor is this a strained and artificial expression. It is full-toned chorus; it is hearty praise;

it is jubilant adoration. And as that doxology of the Redeemer waxes louder and fuller, the very pillars and arches of heaven are tremulous with joy. Divested of all that is tropical and symbolical in form, the one idea conveyed to us is, that the climacteric of redemption is full, irrepressible, eternal joy. A religion which falls short of positive and unfailing pleasure, as the ultimate law of life, cannot meet the necessities of humanity. Redemption is an advance on creation. It more than regains what was lost, more than restores what was original. The burden of that heavenly song is salvation, blessing, and thanksgiving. The second Paradise is better than Eden. The joy of man redeemed, restored, and perfected, is greater than that of man in the glory of his innocence." — *William Adams*.

IV. **THE GLORIOUS FUTURE**, Rev. 21, 22. We have already seen some of the parts of the future which lies before those who have served God and Christ faithfully on earth. These last two chapters of the Book of the Revelation picture to us the ultimate City of God, when all the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ; when all the thoughts of man shall have come into captivity unto Christ and his teachings.

Whatever the suffering of the world; whatever the sin of the world; whatever the failure of Christians to make the world better; we have the absolute assurance from what our eyes can see, that Christ's prayer is being answered, that His kingdom is coming, and His will shall yet be done on earth as it is in heaven. We can stand



Courtesy of W. F. Ottarson.

"The Triumph of Truth Over Evil."
(Henry Brown Fuller.)

beside St. John on Patmos as he looks down the centuries, and while we cannot see with him the kingdom of heaven fully come among the inhabitants of the earth, we can see the increasing signs of its coming, even in the midst of the great tribulation.

The new earth is to be the product of the new heaven. As fast and as far as the people on earth become filled with the spirit and life of "the new heaven," so far will the physical world become transformed into a more perfect instrument for the use and work of the higher spiritual life. This means a long and hard fight for the people of God; a material fight against all the hosts of wickedness in high places; and a moral fight against the powers of evil in our own hearts. "We may talk of streets of gold and gates of pearl, but the presence of Christ and the absence of sin will make heaven." Heaven with all its outward glories is the fitting environment for the eternal abode of those who have the heavenly spirit and life. If one seeks merely a heavenly place—the golden streets, the river of peace flowing among fruit trees, the emerald bow about the throne, the jewelled walls and gates of pearl—he is not seeking heaven, nor on the way to heaven, nor can he get there by that road. It needs the long fight for purity and sinlessness, in the world and in our own hearts.

"The Son of God goes forth to war
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in his train?
Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain;
Who patient bears his cross below, —
He follows in his train.

"A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid,
Around the Saviour's throne rejoice,
In robes of light arrayed.
They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil, and pain:
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train." — *R. Heber.*

V. THE PERMANENT MESSAGE OF THE REVELATION. The Revelation was written as a message to the persecuted Christians of the first century after Christ. How far is it a message to us in the twentieth century? God revealed the vision of the opening heavens that all might see what heaven is like, to lead us all to the better world. In God is united perfect goodness, perfect wisdom; to these appertains perfect power. This is the thought that gives the angels strength. This is the inspiration to their work.

"Let us rise to it as St. John rose to it. . . . Let us think of the brave and true men who in other days . . . have not counted their lives dear to them, that we might know Him better, and that their land might be a witness of Him, and might be a better inheritance for their sons. Let us think of those whom we have seen battling and suffering in the midst of us, fainting, yet victorious: caring, above all things, that they might show forth the name of Him who is love, and might bear His likeness." — *Rev. Frederick D. Maurice.*

Persecution for righteousness' sake is not even yet gone from the world. It is but a few hundred years since many a Christian was tortured in the Inquisition. In heathen countries even to-day many a Christian suffers for his faith in Christ; and even so in lands not heathen, but non-Christian.

Illustration. Not long ago, at the time of one of the Armenian massacres by the Turks, three hundred Armenians were brought together on a field, where they faced a battalion of armed Mohammedan soldiers, ready to fire upon them.

The captain told the Armenians that they could save their lives if they would renounce Christianity and become Mohammedans. They might indicate it by the simple method of holding up their hands. Those who refused were to be immediately shot.

Not one Armenian Christian raised his hand, even to save himself from immediate death.

The captain in this case was so astonished that he sent the soldiers away and gave release to the Christians for their bravery and their loyalty to Jesus Christ.

But millions of Armenians have been as brave, and have lost their lives, even amidst great suffering, for the sake of Christ.

"Oh, may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And win with them the victor's crown of gold."

Learn by heart the songs of triumph scattered through the Book of Revelation, in order that they may be your song in hours of trial, like the songs Paul and Silas sang in prison, in the midst of their suffering and in expectation of death.

It is our business to shut away from the world all that defiles, and all wrong of every kind. There could be no heavenly joy with this old earth unchanged, but there are more ways than one of making it new. Take sin out of it, and it would be new enough with no further transformation. Give us new eyes, free from the clogs of earthliness, and there would straightway be new heavens, though every constellation remained what it now is.

"Keep On Dreaming." The most urgent need of the hour is for seers, who, believing in the necessity and the possibility of a new world based on and pervaded by love, can dream it into pictures, as John on Patmos beheld and portrayed the holy city coming down from God out of heaven. Visions fire men's imaginations, kindle their hopes, enlist their loyalties, and call out their resolves. Let fancy, prompted by Christian love, play upon all the situations and circumstances of life you confront. Dream what a household's ways, a school's studies, a factory's work, a farm's life, a community's pleasures, a nation's influence, a church's ministry, would be like were it controlled by such love as was divinely commended to us on Calvary. Count no time wasted spent in building such castles in the air. Suppose they are in the air; that is where they should be, aloft and conspicuous: and gradually the foundations of many generations can be raised up to give them solid and substantial substructure. Such gleaming air castles on the horizon are of more actual worth to humanity than all the skyscraping steel edifices that house its present business.

Nothing is comparable in value to the ideal made concrete in vision. Men must see what may be before they will determine that it is so good that they will venture their all to make it come true." — *The Congregationalist*.

"One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down."

"Thine early dreams, which came in shapes of light,
Came, bearing prophecy —
Commissioned sweetly to unfold
Thy possible to thee.
Fear not to build thine eyrie in the heights,
Bright with celestial day;
And trust thyself unto thine inmost soul
In simple faith alway.
And God shall make divinely real
The highest forms of thine ideal." — *Anne Preston*.

The question we should ask ourselves is, Are we going toward this heavenly ideal? Is this that we are doing, what we should do if we were among the angels and glorified saints?



The Alice Freeman Palmer Memorial Statue.

When President of Wellesley College, Alice Freeman Palmer said: "God help me to give what He gave — myself, and make that self worth something to somebody; teach me to love all He loved, for the sake of the infinite possibilities locked up in every human soul."

"But lo there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of glory passes on His way.
Alleluia!

"From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Alleluia!"

"Blessed are those that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. . . . And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

LESSON XIII (26). — March 28.

REVIEW: THE LIFE WORK OF PETER AND JOHN.

SELECTION FOR READING: Rev. 21: 21—22: 5.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* — **MATT. 28: 19, 20.**

Additional Material for Teachers: John 1: 42; 21: 15-24; 1 Pet. 1: 3; 1 John 1: 1-4.

Primary Topic: TWO STORIES ABOUT PETER.

Lesson Material: Acts 3: 1-16; 12: 1-17.

Memory Verse: Lo, I am with you always. Matt. 28: 20.

Junior Topic: PETER AND JOHN WINNING OTHERS TO CHRIST.

Lesson Material: Lessons of the Quarter.

Memory Verses: Acts 4: 12; 1 John 1: 9.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: PETER AND JOHN COMPARED AND CONTRASTED.

Topic for Young People and Adults: THE CONTRIBUTION OF PETER AND JOHN TO CHRISTIAN HISTORY.

The Life Story of Peter and John falls into two distinct sections; as in truth does the life story of all Christian Workers, then and now.

Part First includes the years of their training; their home life and influences; their schools and schoolmasters; and their special training in the *School of Christ* during His life on this earth.

This part of their life was the subject of our study during the first half of this course, in the last Quarter of 1919.

Part Second is the story of their work for the Master; the use they made of their training; their successes and failures; and what they really have done for the world.

Part First: *The Training of Peter and John:* their lives until the Ascension of their Master, Jesus Christ.

We will take up this section of the story very briefly, as we made a careful study of it three months ago.

1. Simon and John were brought up as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Their home was originally at Bethsaida at the head of the lake; later they lived in Capernaum. They had the common education of the Jewish youths of that time.

2. They were brought up together as friends and comrades; later they became partners in the fishing business. Peter was the older of the two, perhaps the oldest of the Twelve Apostles; John may have been the youngest of the Twelve.

3. They became converts of John the Baptist, and were baptized in the Jordan; and were looking for the Messiah.

4. They were two of the first four of Jesus' disciples.

5. Simon was renamed Peter, the Rock-man, by Jesus; and in due time he became what his name implied.

6. John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved"; the closest human friend of the Man Christ Jesus.

7. John is called "the Apostle of Love," but that does not imply any weakness of character. Witness the name given to him by Christ (Mark 10 : 37), "Boanerges," "son of thunder," because of his burning and impetuous spirit.

8. They were, like all Jesus' disciples, specimens of the ordinary men of their time. Jesus, in selecting the Twelve, did not choose men of a single noble type, but men of a great variety of qualities; he gathered into his first church just such people as fill his churches to-day. Here is the encouragement for his followers now.

9. Peter and John, and James the brother of John, were the three highest students in the School of Christ. It was Peter who, when the twelve apostles were asked their opinion of Jesus, — "Who say ye that I am?" — answered first of all, — "The Christ of God."

It was Peter, James, and John who went with Jesus into the presence of death, when He raised the daughter of Jairus; who went with Him up the Mount of Transfiguration, and saw His glory; who were taken as the inmost guard in the Garden of Sorrow, when even they failed Him, and slept while He was in His agony.

10. Peter and John followed the example of the rest of the apostles in forsaking Jesus and fleeing, when the soldiers arrested their Master in the Garden. But, again, they are the only ones mentioned as turning back and following Him, — even "afar off."

11. Peter thrice denied his Master during the hours of the Jewish trial. "And he went out and wept bitterly," in deep repentance for his failure.

12. John stood at the cross during the sad hours when Jesus suffered there; to him Jesus confided his mother; and John took her at once to his own home.

13. On the resurrection morn Jesus appeared to Peter alone. No one ever knew what was said at that first meeting; but its influence must have remained with Peter until his death.

14. At the meeting of Jesus with seven of his disciples at the Sea of Galilee Peter was openly restored to full forgiveness and full fellowship with the other apostles: three times he was lovingly asked, Simon, dost thou love me? and three times he answered, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. And three times was he told to minister to Christ's followers.

15. After Peter's restoration and forgiveness Jesus foretold his death for the sake of the Gospel he was to preach. He asked for light on the fate of his friend John, and Jesus said: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" So the opinion spread that John was to live until the second appearance of Jesus in glory. Yet, as John himself notes, that was not Jesus' statement. However John did much outlive Peter, and survived even the destruction of Jerusalem, which was one beginning of the era of the coming of the Lord.

PART SECOND : THE LIFE-WORK OF PETER AND JOHN : From Pentecost to Patmos.

(The lessons of the Quarter just past.)

I. THE STORY OF PENTECOST.

The waiting of the disciples for the Promise of the Father.
The one recorded event between the Ascension and Pentecost.
The sound of the rushing mighty wind.
The tongues of fire upon every praying disciple.
The coming of the Holy Spirit, and its effects.
Peter the leader among the disciples: why? how?
The signs of a great change in Peter: what? how?
The results of the preaching of Peter: why?

The First Christian Church.

II. A MIRACLE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

Peter and John on their way to the temple: when? why?
The lame beggar at the gate of the temple: why?
Such as I have give I thee: what was it?
The wonder among the people.
Peter's sermon to the crowd: where?
The effect of the sermon: why were the Apostles arrested?

III. THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN.

The trial before the rulers: for what reason?
 The wonder of the rulers: why?
 The rulers' quandary: what? why?
 The sentence of the court
 Peter's appeal to the right: obey God — or man: which?
 The song of praise to God: why?

The Church Beautiful and Bountiful.

IV. THE DANGER WITHIN THE CHURCH.

The generosity of Barnabas.
 Ananias and Sapphira.
 What did they envy? how did they think they would obtain it?
 Lying to God: is it always punished?
 The fate of Ananias and Sapphira: was it just? its effect?
 The greater power of the Church after its purification.
 The second trial of Peter and John: why? with what result?

V. THE BEGINNINGS IN SAMARIA.

The appointment of the seven "deacons": why? who?
 The death of Stephen: Saul's part in his death.
 The beginning of severe persecution: by whom? why?
 Philip in Samaria.
 Simon the sorcerer: was he really converted?
 Peter and Simon the sorcerer.
 Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.
 The conversion of Saul.

VI. PETER AT LYDDA AND JOPPA.

The tour of the country: why?
 The "saints which dwelt at Lydda": who?
 Aeneas at Lydda: what he received.
 Tabitha — Dorcas — of Joppa: her work for Jesus.
 The death of Dorcas: the sending for Peter: why?
 The raising of Dorcas; compare with that of Jairus' daughter.
 The effect of the miracle.
 Simon Peter and Simon the tanner.

VII. CORNELIUS THE ROMAN CENTURION.

Roman centurions: their position and influence.
 The character of this centurion.
 The vision of Cornelius: what? when? why?
 The vision of Peter: what? when? why?
 The messengers from Cornelius.
 The visit of Peter to Cornelius: why of such importance?
 Why did Peter take Christians from Joppa with him?
 The coming of the Holy Spirit: why especially noteworthy?
 Peter's sermon to the people.
 The criticism of Peter, and his defence: the result?

The First Fruits of the Gentiles.

VIII. THE WONDERFUL DELIVERANCE OF PETER.

Herod the King.
 The martyrdom of James.
 Peter arrested also: why the delay in executing him?
 The strong guard: why so strong?
 The praying church: where? for what did they pray?
 The angel of deliverance.
 The story of the deliverance.
 The surprise of the church: was it lack of faith?
 The fate of Herod.

IX. THE WRITINGS OF PETER.

What are they? where written? to whom?
 Peter's ideals for Christian living.

X. THE WRITINGS OF JOHN.

John's letters: to whom? when and where written?
 Christian love: its source? its qualities? its results?

XI. THE VISIONS OF JOHN.

Where? for whom written? at what time written?
The glorified Christ: the symbolic description.
The seven churches of Asia: how are they examples of the church of to-day?
Christ's message to the churches: how applicable to us?
Christ the centre of all things.

XII. THE GLORY OF THE REDEEMED IN HEAVEN.

Who are the redeemed? from what redeemed?
The great tribulation: what? when? why?
The great multitude: its limits? its race? its occupation?
Worship in heaven: its character? its qualities?
The glorious future for the followers of Christ.
The message of the Revelation to the men of its time.
The message of the Revelation to us to-day.
The signs of the coming of the Kingdom.

Peter and John Compared and Contrasted. From the lessons of this Quarter, and the last Quarter of 1919, make two lists, one of the qualities you have seen in Peter; one of those seen in John.

Their characters are widely apart; yet with many marked similarities. They are both devoted to Jesus; both leaders in the church; both impulsive; both full of courage; both foreign missionaries, — but Home missionaries first.

A comparison of this sort will be a good exercise for the class; there is not room enough here to make a full comparison, even if it were not better for the scholars to study out their own.

The Contribution of Peter and John to Christian History was great. Were the first twelve chapters of the Acts eliminated we would lose much of importance to the understanding of the remainder of the history. Peter's great change from the coward who denied even an acquaintance with his Master to the bold preacher before the great council, — though himself not a learned man, or experienced in the courts, — shows us as nothing else could the power of the Holy Spirit, and throws great light on the courage of later martyrs for Christ; and encourages us in our times of discouragement at our own failings and failures.

Peter, with Paul, is supposed to have founded the church at Rome which from its foundation has exercised a great influence on the religious life of the world.

The Gospel of John contains what is to us the greatest part of the teachings of Jesus which come close to our hearts. His chapters on Christian Love in his first Epistle are as much classics as Paul's wonderful chapter on Love. John gave us that "greatest sentence in the literature of the world," the sentence which is in the mouths of our youngest children, when they first begin to learn of Jesus, — "God is Love." John, too, is he who has given us, of all the writers in the Bible, the clearest and grandest idea of our future, — of the wonderful things which Jesus has gone to prepare for us in his Father's house, of which "the half has never been told."





SECOND QUARTER.

(FIRST HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE.)

APRIL 4—JUNE 27, 1920.

LESSON I. — April 4.

ISRAEL RULED BY JUDGES. — Judges 2:6-23.

PRINT Judges 2:6-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.— *When in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.* — 2 CHRON. 15:4.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 2.

Additional Material for Teachers : Judges 1:1-2:5; 3:1-6.

Primary Topic : GOD'S KINDNESS.

Lesson Material : Josh. 24:1, 13-16, 25-29; Judges 2:11-13, 16; 3:9-11.

Memory Verse : He careth for you. 1 Pet. 5:7.

Junior Topic : GOD RULING ISRAEL THROUGH JUDGES.

Lesson Material : Judges 2:6-16.

Memory Verse : Judges 2:16.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : A NATION SAVED BY PATRIOTIC LEADERS.

Topic for Young People and Adults : GOD WORKING THROUGH NATIONAL LEADERS.

Additional Material : Same as for Teachers.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

Primary and Junior Classes. — Make the boys and girls see that the Israelites were in trouble because of their sins. Show them how greatly they needed God's help and how that help was sent them. Apply the lesson to the children's own forgetfulness of God. Who is it that God sends as he sent the judges to Israel? Our teachers, parents, friends, pastor, sometimes even the police!

Intermediate and Senior Classes. — Make this a map study. Point out the

location of the heathen tribes surrounding the Israelites. Show how Palestine was in the centre between Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome. It has thus been a great battlefield for the nations. Speak especially of the termination of these long series of struggles in the conquest of Palestine by General Allenby in the Great War.

Young People and Adults. — Make this a study of true patriotism. Assign to some member of the class the task of bringing in a list of men in our own national history who have played the part



YOUNG DAVID RESCUING THE LAMB.

Elizabeth Gardner.

that was played by the judges in Israel — men like Franklin, Hamilton, Hancock, Washington, Samuel Adams, Sumner. Ask another to come prepared to speak of emergencies in our own history which have been brought about by the taking away of national leaders as Joshua was taken away, — Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley. Ask another to bring in a list of a dozen outstanding patriots of the present day — our real leaders; while still another will be ready to tell how we may make these leaders most effective.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Joshua died about 1450 B.C. (Beecher). The period of the judges extends from that year to the crowning of Saul, 1102 B.C., — three and a half centuries.

Place. — The judges sprang from various parts of the country, — Judah (Othniel), Benjamin (Ehud), Ephraim (Deborah and Abdon), Naphtali (Barak), Manasseh (Gideon), Gilead (Jephthah and Jair), Issachar (Tola), Zebulun (Ibzan and Elon), and Dan (Samson); from north and south, from west and from east of the Jordan.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on the book of Judges in The Cambridge Bible (by Lias), *The New Century Bible* (by Thatcher), *The International Critical Commentary* (by

Moore), *The Bible for Home and School* (by Curtis), *Handbooks for Bible Classes* (by Douglas), *The Expositor's Bible* (by Watson), Ellicott, Parker, Kent (*Beginnings of Hebrew History*), Edersheim, Geikie, etc. *Gideon and the Judges*, by Lang. Dummelow's *One-Volume Commentary*.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The origin and purpose of the book of Judges.
The character and work of the judges.
What great leaders do for a nation.
The causes of national degeneration.
National punishment for national sin.
The temptations to idolatry.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : A Wise Summary of Instructive History.

- I. A TASK HALF DONE, Judges 1: 1-2: 5.
The book of Judges.
 - II. JOSHUA DEAD, THE PEOPLE FORGET, vs. 6-10.
The value of religious education.
 - III. GOD'S ANGER AND THE PEOPLE'S DISTRESS, vs. 11-15.
Sin and punishment.
 - IV. GOD'S LEADERS BRING PEACE AND SAFETY, vs. 16-23.
What is true patriotism?
- EASTER LESSON :** THE SECOND JOSHUA.

I. A TASK HALF DONE, Judges 1: 1-2: 5. THE BOOK OF JUDGES "was designed to furnish a history of Israel during the period intervening between the death of Joshua and the birth of Samuel, or from the close of the conquest of Canaan to the beginnings of the Hebrew monarchy. But this was not its only purpose. The main portion of the book (2: 6-16: 31) was clearly designed to teach a great religious lesson, to wit, that departure from the service of Jehovah, especially in the worship of other gods, brought oppression and disaster upon the people of Israel, from which relief might be obtained by crying to Jehovah, who stood ready to raise up a deliverer, under whom rest from foreign oppression might be enjoyed." — *Prof. Edward Lewis Curtis*.

The Talmud says that the traditional author was Samuel, but modern scholars say that Samuel could not have written the book. "The main portion of the book is based upon oral or written traditions of a local and perhaps a tribal character. Of this central part the Song of Deborah (chap. 5) is the most ancient, and bears every mark of being a contemporary record. The narratives of Judges are set in a framework of chronology, and of ethical comment and teaching, which are probably independent of one another." — *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

"We must not expect in the book of Judges a complete or successive history of Israel during these three and a half centuries. Sacred history is primarily that of the kingdom of God, and only secondarily that of individuals or periods. This is the reason why we have no record at all of five of the judges (Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon). For this cause also some events are specially selected in the sacred narrative which to the superficial reader may seem trivial. For the same reason also we must not look for strict chronological arrangement in the narratives. In

6. And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.

7. And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.

point of fact, the judges ruled only over one or several of the tribes, to whom they brought special deliverance. Accordingly, the history of some of the judges overlaps each other, their reign having been contemporaneous in different parts of the land." — *Edersheim*.

The story of the book of Judges opens with a depressing situation. With the deaths of Joshua and the high priest Eleazar, and then with the death of his son Phinehas the third high priest, "the age of stern fidelity to the national covenant with Jehovah seems to have come to a close. Weary with years of struggle, satisfied with what they had acquired, tempted to seek friendship with the Canaanites by the similarity of language, the opportunities of profit, the seductions of neighborhood, by their own want of military science and by the weakness of tribal division, their warlike feelings gave way to a desire for ease and quiet. The rush of invasion had spent its force, and now the rods which could not even be bent when united were easily broken in detail when apart." — *Cunningham Geikie*.

THE VALUE OF THOROUGHNESS. The Israelites learned by the sad experience of these three and a half centuries — or should have learned — the folly of leaving half-done tasks behind them. "He doeth much that doeth a thing well," wrote Thomas à Kempis. On the other hand, a thing done poorly is hardly done at all.

This is notably true of all matters connected with religion, because these are of final importance, and require wholeheartedness for their essential character. "Probably most of the difficulties of trying to live the Christian life," said Henry Drummond, "arise from attempting to half live it."

Illustration. A great sculptor had finished the figure and face of a colossal statue and then spent day after day in delicate work on the arrangement of the hair. A critic asked him, "Why spend so much time on the hair? No one will see it up there." The answer came, "If we cannot see it from down here, God will see it from above." The Israelites thought that the final touches on the work of freeing

Canaan from the heathen were not necessary, but God looked down from above, and condemned their work as half done.

II. JOSHUA DEAD, THE PEOPLE FORGET, vs. 6-10. 6. Now when Joshua had sent the people away. From the great national gathering at Shechem; see Josh. 24:28-30, which is almost identical with this passage. That gathering had been rendered notable by Joshua's farewell address and by the people's solemn promise to serve Jehovah. The children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance.



Joshua's Charge to the Elders of Israel.

From an old print.

The portion of the land that had been allotted to him. To possess the land. To enter upon the possession of it. They had already won much of it from the heathen, but were still in their armed camps.

7. And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua. The influence of a good, strong man, in a family, a church, a community, a nation, abides long after

8. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

9. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.

10. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

his death. And all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua. The "elders" were the chiefs of the clans or families, called "elders" because they were usually old men. Who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel — the exodus from Egypt, preceded by the marvellous plagues; the wonders of Sinai, the preservation in the wilderness, such events as the miraculous fall of Jericho. In the parallel passage in Joshua the word "great" does not occur, because in Joshua's day the people had not sinned against God's goodness as they did under the judges, so that the writer of that book did not feel the contrast between the conduct of the people and that of Jehovah. It is when men greatly sin that the wise man sees that God has greatly blessed.

8. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah. He could have won no higher title; it was the title borne by the second Joshua, our Lord Jesus Himself. Died, being a hundred and ten years old. Servants of Jehovah are certain to live long — if not in years, then in usefulness and happiness.

9. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance; that is, within the compass of the land allotted to him. In Timnath-heres. Perhaps modern Tibnah, about twelve and one half miles east-northeast of Lydda; perhaps Kefr Harith, nine miles south of Shechem. In the hill-country of Ephraim. This region extended along the rocky backbone of Palestine from north of Jerusalem to the Plain of Esdraelon in Galilee; later these highlands were called Samaria. On the north of the mountain of Gaash. A hill whose exact location is unknown.

10. There arose another generation . . . that knew not Jehovah. Of course they knew him with their heads, but not with their hearts. Nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel. They had not had personal experience of the marvels of exodus and conquest, but they might have cherished the grateful memory of them handed down from their fathers, and they might have had their own experiences of God's goodness and power, different from their fathers' experience, but quite as blessed and wonderful.

THE VALUE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. "The slackness in exterminating the Canaanites was accompanied by a slackness in the godly training of their own children. Minds left empty of careful, loving training in the things of God became a prey to immorality and to false worship." — *Principal George C. M. Douglas.*

Illustration. A traveller in the Southern mountains found an old woman alone in a cabin. Her three boys had left her one by one to go to sea, and she did not know why. But the traveller saw over the rude fireplace an old picture of the ocean with a ship sailing over it, — the only ornament in the room. The mother had herself sent the boys away with that picture. So it is with all children: they will follow the path in life which their elders, perhaps unconsciously, picture to them as desirable.

"To teach a few Sunday school children week after week commonplace, simple truths — persevering in spite of dullness and mean capacities — is a more glorious occupation than the highest meditations or creations of genius which edify or instruct only our own solitary soul." — *F. W. Robertson.*

"If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal souls, if we imbue them with immortal principles, with the just fear of God and love of fellow men, we engrave on those tablets something which will brighten all eternity." — *Daniel Webster.*

"Mothers and teachers of children, whether in public school or in Sunday school, fill places so great that there isn't an angel in heaven that wouldn't be glad to give a bushel of diamonds to come down here and take their place." — *Billy Sunday.*

11. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim :

12. And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.,



A Baal.

story of the sacrifice on Mount the sacrifice of human life were — *New Century Bible.*

12. And they forsook Jehovah. While the people were often at war, and realized that Jehovah was necessary to them, they were so strict in the true worship that they even marched against their kindred east of Jordan when they heard that they had set up an altar of their own (Josh. 22 : 10-34). Now, in times of peace, they forgot their need of Jehovah and forsook him. The God of their fathers, the God of the past blessed experience of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua. Who brought them out of the land of Egypt. God is to be worshipped because of his inherent majesty, wisdom, power, and goodness, but also because of the good things he does for his children. And followed other gods. "The temptation to this worship arose from the fact that Baals were generally nature gods through whom abundant harvests or other good fortunes were supposed to come." — *Bible for Home and School.* In addition, there were the sensual pleasures of Baal-worship, and the fact that the Baals were the gods of the peoples that were round about them. Imitation, the subtle temptation to conformity in evil, greatly aided the apostasy. And bowed themselves down unto them. It was open and shameless worship and not merely worship in secret. And they provoked Jehovah to anger. He was justly angry, not

III. GOD'S ANGER AND THE PEOPLE'S DISTRESS, vs. 11-15. We now meet, in vs. 11, 12, the formula which, after the death of each of the greater judges of Israel, describes the continued ingratitude of the people. See Judges 3 : 7, 12 ; 4 : 1 ; 6 : 1 ; 8 : 33 ; 10 : 6 ; 13 : 1. It is a striking illustration of the monotony of wickedness.

11. And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. It is God's seeing, and not merely man's, that constitutes right and wrong. And served the Baalim, the local gods. Baal (Baalim is the plural) means "possessor," and is usually followed by the name of the place owned by the god, as "the Baal of Tyre." "The Baals were generally nature gods. Their altars were on high-places, and offerings were made of animals and the produce of the soil. Sacred posts (*asherahs*) and stones (*masses*) were accessories to the altars. The Baals had their priests, whose extravagances appear in the Carmel (1 Kings 18 : 20 ff.). Gross immorality and sometimes associated with the worship of the Baals."



Ancient Altars.

13. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

14. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

only at the ingratitude of his people for whom he had done so much, but still more because they had forsaken his pure worship for a worship full of cruelty, leading even to human sacrifice, and full also of the most bestial licentiousness.

13. And they . . . served Baal and the Ashtaroth. Ashtaroth is the Hebrew name of the heathen goddess Astarte (Phœnician "Ashtart," Babylonian "Ishtar," Arabian "Athtar," Syrian "Athar"), the deity of the female principle, as Baal is the deity of the male. "She seems to have combined the conception of the Greek Hera, Artemis, and Aphrodite, and was worshipped both as the moon-goddess and as Venus." — *Cambridge Bible*.

14. Jehovah . . . delivered them into the hands of spoilers. Victorious foes, who carried off large booty, animals and goods, as well as numbers of captives. He sold them into the hands of their enemies, as slaves would be sold; he gave them up entirely, because they had given him up entirely.

15. Whithersoever they went out, that is, to make war. The hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, not because Jehovah wished them evil, but because he wished them good, wished to bring them to their senses. As Jehovah had spoken. See Lev. 26:14-33; Deut. 28:1-25. And they were sore distressed; literally, "were in great straits."

SIN AND PUNISHMENT. "Nothing in this world or the next can be compared for horror to the withdrawal of God from us. Take the sun from the centre of the solar system, and each planet, breaking from its leash, would pursue a headlong course, colliding with the rest, and dashing into the abyss. So when God's presence is lost, every power in the soul rises in revolt." — *F. B. Meyer*. "One backslider will do more harm than twenty Christian men can do good." — *W. E. Blackstone*. These ancient Israelites were backsliders.

"The best antidote against evils of all kinds is to keep hold of the good we have." — *Dean Stanley*. The Israelites knew enough about God to save them from all their sorrows, if they had only held on to what they knew.

Illustration. A Sunday-school superintendent was talking to his children about the evil one. "The devil," he said, "is going about like a —," and he left the children to finish the sentence. A small boy put up his hand and finished it: "Recruiting sergeant, sir!" Any one willing to enlist in the devil's army will find him at hand ready to take in the recruit.

Illustration. A German legend tells of a hunter who made a league with the devil. Between them they cast seven bullets, all just alike, which the hunter was to use. Six of the bullets were to hit whatever the hunter wished to hit, but the seventh — and the hunter did not know which of them it was — would return and kill the hunter himself. So it is with all sin: it has its way for a time, as the Israelites had their way with their idolatry; but before long it slays the sinner. Sin is like —

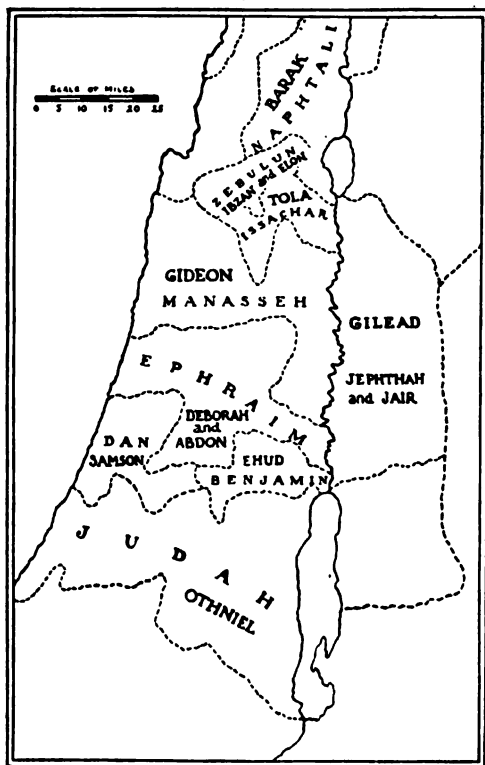
"the little rift within the lute
That by and by will make the music mute,
And, ever widening, slowly silence all." — *Tennyson*.



An Ashtoreth. Rawlinson.

16. Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

IV. GOD'S LEADERS BRING PEACE AND SAFETY, vs. 16-23. 16. Jehovah raised up judges. "The judges were heroes who owed their influence to a victory over their country's oppressors, and whose very office testified to the utter disorganization of their nation." — *Cambridge Bible*. "There were twelve of these judges, not including Abimelech, who was a petty king and not called of God." — *Davis's Bible Dictionary*. They were Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah (and Barak), Gideon, Tola and Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. Eli and Samuel judged the people, but the former was high priest and the latter was a prophet. Who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them, turning defeat into victory, and winning back their possessions and their captives.



Canaan as Divided among the Tribes, a Judge from Each Tribe.

17. And yet they hearkened not unto their judges, even though these judges had delivered them. To be sure, the book of Judges does not tell of any direct disobedience to any judge; for that we must wait till the people chose a king in opposition to the desire of Samuel (1 Sam. 7:15; 8:6). But the spirit of the people, especially in the matter of idolatry, was often contrary to the spirit of the judges.

18. Jehovah was with the judge. The Bible teaches that God is the origin of all noble actions, all worthy living. It is said even of the workmen who made the tabernacle that they accomplished their task because God's Spirit was in them (Ex. 28:3; 31:3; 35:31). That is true of all good work — it comes from God. It repented Jehovah because of their groaning. "The correct translation is, 'Jehovah was sorry,' or 'was moved to pity.'" — *New Century Bible*. The unchangeable God cannot repent in the sense in which man repents (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam.

15:29; Jas. 1:17); but as man turns again to him, he turns again to man.

19. When the judge was dead, . . . they turned back. "How powerful the presence of one good man is in a church or state, is best found in his loss." — *Bishop Hall*. Such a moral decline occurred after the deaths of Othniel, Ehud, Barak and Deborah, and Gideon (Judg. 3:11, 12; 4:1; 5:31; 6:1; 8:33).

20. Jehovah . . . said, Because this nation have transgressed my covenant. For this covenant see Ex. 34:10-15.

21. I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them. The way in which God drove out the heathen tribes is finely described in Josh. 23:8-13.

22. That by them I may prove Israel. The presence of these idol-worshippers so close at hand would test the Hebrews, and show whether they would be true to the one true God, or not. In Judg. 3:1, 2 an additional reason is given, namely, that these heathen neighbors by their opposition keep the Hebrews alert, strong,

and well-trained in the arts of war. It is not good for a nation or an individual to have all plain sailing.

23. So Jehovah left those nations. For a list of the nations left to plague the Jews throughout their history see Judg. 3:3. **Without driving them out hastily.** We learn from Deut. 7:22 that God did not intend to drive out all the heathen tribes immediately; one by one they were to be conquered, as the Israelites increased in numbers and power, otherwise God's people would be too few to cope with the wild beasts and to maintain the land in cultivation. It was this gradual and orderly process of subduing their enemies that was interrupted by the disobedience of the Hebrews.

WHAT IS TRUE PATRIOTISM? Joshua and the elders that followed him were true patriots. In God's strength they did their best for their country. This involved keeping themselves pure and strong, that their country might be strong and pure. "Christian character is the foundation upon which we must build if our citizenship is to be lifted up and our institutions are to endure." — *President McKinley*.

"The only safe democracy is a theocracy, wherein every man counts himself a subject of the kingdom of heaven." — *Prof. Cleland B. McAfee*.

"The greatest peril of the nation is secularism." — *John R. Mott*.

"The first essential toward the achievement of good citizenship is the building up of the kind of character which will make the man a good husband, a good father, a good son; which will make the woman a good daughter when she is young, a good wife and mother as she grows older." — *Theodore Roosevelt*.

"The strength of a nation can never rise higher than the faithfulness to truth and duty of its own active citizenship." — *Byron H. Stauffer*. The noblest leaders in Israel were of no avail against the infidelity and immorality of the majority of the people.

Illustration. Once the Secretary of the Interior, Franklin K. Lane, addressed the clerks of his department on Flag Day. He said that that morning, as he went into the Land Office, the flag dropped him a most cordial salutation, and from its rippling folds he heard it say, "Good morning, Mr. Flag Maker." Then came a conversation between Mr. Lane and the flag in which the flag made it clear that every one who was trying to do his duty was helping to make the real flag of the nation, and the flag closed with the eloquent words: "I am whatever you make me, nothing more. I am your belief in yourself, your dream of what a people may become. I am all that you hope to be and have the courage to try for. I am the day's work of the weakest man, and the largest dream of the most daring. My stars and my stripes are your dreams and your labors. They are bright with cheer, brilliant with courage, firm with faith, because you have made them so out of your hearts; for you are the makers of the flag, and it is well that you glory in the making."



For God and Country.

ALTERNATE TEXT FOR EASTER LESSON. — LUKE 24:13-31.

EASTER LESSON. — THE SECOND JOSHUA. "Jesus" and "Joshua" are different forms of the same word. Jesus was the second Joshua of his race. He led the Jews, and through the Jews he led all men, into the true Canaan, the permanent Palestine, the Holy Land of the soul. All enemies fell before him, even "the last enemy," death. He left his people, as Joshua did, disappearing from their mortal eyes. Like Joshua, he left elders to continue his work, the apostles and their successors. Far better than Joshua, he rose from the dead, he returned to earth in the Holy Spirit, he is with his people always, even to the end of the world.

Thus this inspiring lesson from the Old Testament makes contact with the most inspiring event of the New Testament, the climax event of all time.

But, like the ancient Israelites, we may forsake the teachings of our Joshua, neutralizing all that he has done for us. We may go over to heathenism. We may exile ourselves from our Canaan. Sin will bring upon us all the woe it brought upon the generation that followed Joshua and "knew not Jehovah."

Illustration. "There is a heathen story which tells us that once a man asked for this gift — not to die; and it was granted him by the Fates. He was to live on forever. But he had forgotten to ask that his youth and health and strength also might last forever, and so he lived on till age and its infirmities and weaknesses were

weighing him down, and his life grew to be a weariness and a burden to him." — *J. R. Miller*. Thus the Israelites sought the joys of life, but forgot the things that alone make life enjoyable, namely, virtue and purity, love of God and obedience to his commands. If Easter meant only the life of the body, it would not be worth celebrating; but it stands for the greatest of all blessings, the eternal life of the soul.

LESSON II. — April 11.

DEBORAH AND BARAK DELIVER ISRAEL. — Judges 4:4-5:31.

PRINT Judges 4:4-16.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.* — Ps. 46:1.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 46.

Additional Material for Teachers: Judg. 4:1-3; Heb. 11:32, 33.

Primary Topic: A BRAVE WOMAN HELPING A GENERAL.

Lesson Material: Judg. 4:4-10, 12-15.

Memory Verse: God in my helper. Ps. 54:4.

Junior Topic: A STORY OF A HERO AND A HEROINE.

Lesson Material: Judg. 4:4-16.

Memory Verse: Josh. 1:9.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: FIGHTING ON GOD'S SIDE.

Topic for Young People and Adults: THE SERVICE OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

For the younger classes we shall omit, of course, the gresome story of Jael, and shall make this a lesson in helpfulness. Here were a brave man and a brave woman, both doing their best, each helping the other. So the boys and girls, in the home, the school, and the Sunday school, have numberless chances of helping one another.

The intermediate pupils will appreciate the heroic action of Deborah, Barak, and their followers. They were fighting against heavy odds, but they were fighting for the right. The young people have many such battles to fight right where they are in life. Picture a few of them.

For the older classes a special study of the service of women in the state is suggested. Bring out the glorious work of women in fields of education and reform, instance the W. C. T. U., the Y. W. C. A., the Red Cross. Speak especially of the noble work of women in the war. Go on to discuss the duty and privilege of women in regard to their expanding suffrage. The stories of Deborah and of Jael are full of suggestions.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Professor Beecher's conjectural dates are Othniel, 1432 B.C.; Ehud, 1380 B.C.; Shamgar, 1351 B.C.; Deborah and Barak, 1351 B.C.

Place. — The battle which our lesson describes took place on the largest plain in Palestine, that of Esdraelon, "the valley of Jezreel," in the northern



Plain of Esdraelon.

part of the country, southeast of Mt. Carmel.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Judges named in our last lesson. Deborah is treated in the following books on Bible women and Bible characters: Hastings's *Greater*

Men and Women of the Bible (Vol. II.), Horton's *Women of the Old Testament*, Matheson's *Representative Women of the Bible*, Adeney in *Women of the Bible*, Margaret E. Sangster's *Women of the Bible*, Dr. W. H. P. Faunce in *Women of the Bible*, Mrs. S. T. Martyn's *Women of the Bible*, Broughton's *Representative Women of the Bible*, Mackay's *The Woman of Tact*, Bishop Potter's *Sermons of the City*.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The special work of Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar.
Why the heathen tribes were not destroyed.
The character of Deborah.
The character of Barak.
The character of Jael.
A study of Bible heroines.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Triumph of the Weak when They Are on God's Side.

I. THE STORY OF THREE JUDGES, Judges 3.

Othniel, nephew of Caleb.
Ehud the left-handed.
Shamgar and his ox-goad.

II. A HEROINE AND A HERO IN ISRAEL, Judges 4:1-10.

The terrible Sisera.
Men and women, boys and girls, working together for good.

III. GOD GIVES VICTORY TO HIS PEOPLE, Judges 4:11-24.

The mighty host of evil.
The triumph of God's children.
The power of a woman.

IV. DEBORAH'S HYMN OF VICTORY, Judges 5.

Our victory over our enemies.

I. THE STORY OF THREE JUDGES, Judges 3. Through lack of faith and zeal the Israelites had failed to drive out from Canaan all the heathen tribes. Jehovah would not do this work for his people, since they should do it for themselves. He allowed the heathen tribes to remain in considerable numbers, as a spur to constant effort on the part of the Hebrews through many centuries. At least one good came out of this evil: the constant presence of enemies on their border kept the Israelites from degenerating into softness, and the necessity of frequent fighting stimulated their courage and resourcefulness. But these might have been stimulated in other and better ways.

The heathen nations that thus ever threatened the Hebrews were (Judg. 3:1-6): (1) the Philistines, a powerful confederacy of five cities in the southern part of the Mediterranean coast; (2) the Canaanites, a general term for the original inhabitants, at that time occupying the west and southwest lowlands of Palestine; (3) the Zidonians or Phœnicians, on the coast in the north, with Zidon (Sidon) as their chief city; (4) the Hivites (probably the Hittites are here meant) of the Lebanon region still further north along the coast. Then follow the names of the heathen tribes remaining in the interior of the country, among whom the Israelites lived: (1) the Canaanites, or lowlanders, where the term is not used in general to designate all these nations; (2) the Hittites, those in the neighborhood of Hebron, probably unrelated to the great northern nation of Hittites; (3) the Amorites, or highlanders; (4) the Perizzites, either a definite tribe or dwellers in unvalled villages; (5) the Hivites, who lived in central Palestine; (6) the Jebusites, who lived in and around Jerusalem. With these heathen peoples the degenerate and faithless Israelites intermarried, and came even to worship their vile gods.

The result of this evil doing was sorrow, as it always is. A terrible king, Cushan-rishathaim (just what ruler is meant has not yet been discovered), came down upon the Israelites from northern Syria west of the Euphrates, conquered the land, and held it in servitude for eight miserable years.

What this servitude meant may be learned from the sufferings of the Armenians from the Turks during the World War in this same general region. The unfortunate Armenians were driven from their homes, their goods were seized, the old folks and the sick were cruelly slain, the girls and women suffered all the horrible things that they could be made to endure. Thus the Israelites suffered, and the cry of their woe rose up to Jehovah. They had learned that Baal was unable to save them, and in their distress they gave the true God the worship which they had withheld in their prosperity. How often we of to-day do the same!

THE FIRST JUDGE. God heard the cry of his oppressed people, and raised up a deliverer, the first judge. As we might have expected, it was one of the family of Caleb, that old hero who with Joshua gave the brave advice that the land could be won in spite of its giants, and who forty years later chose for his portion no easy tract but the rocky region of Hebron. It was Othniel, Caleb's nephew, who had

already proved his valor (Judg. 1: 12, 13). "The spirit of the Lord came upon him," and in that power, available for all that will receive it, he conquered the invader from the north, drove him out, and won a forty-years' peace for his country.

THE SECOND JUDGE. As the Israelites again grew careless and fell into evil ways, God allowed them to be conquered in the south by the Moabites under Eglon. The Moabites lived east of the Dead Sea, and had for their allies the Amalekites southwest of the Dead Sea and the Ammonites to the northeast. Together they took Jericho, "the city of palm-trees," which was a serious loss to the Israelites.

But after eighteen years, in answer to the prayers of the oppressed people, God raised up a left-handed warrior, Ehud of the tribe of Benjamin, who got access to King Eglon. Ehud wore a short sword beneath his cloak on his right side, and no harm was suspected when he slipped his left hand in, for the right arm was the common sword-arm. Quick as a flash Ehud drew his sword, slew the Moabite king, and escaped. Under his leadership the intruders were slain, and the ensuing peace lasted eighty years.

Ehud is a good example of the power of originality. A man who does things differently from others, in his own fresh and independent way, has thereby gone far toward success.

THE THIRD JUDGE. The next oppression that seized the Hebrews was from the west, from the Philistines, who occupied the five important cities in the coast district opposite Judah. Shamgar, probably a man of Judah, led the Israelites against them, armed only with an ox-goad. This instrument, "as used in Syria to-day, is a long stick with a blade at one end for cleaning the ploughshare, and often a spike at the other for pricking the animal drawing the plough."—*New Century Bible*. We know nothing about Shamgar except that with this primitive weapon he slew six hundred of the Philistines, an exploit akin to that of Samson with the jaw-bone of an ass (Judg. 15: 15).

The soldier of Jehovah will not be anxious about his weapon. It is the spirit of the Lord that is his true weapon. For material means he will snatch up whatever comes to hand. Thus many of the world's greatest victories have been won by slight means and in the most unexpected way. The telephone, for example, was discovered through the accidental vibration of an instrument with which Bell was experimenting, a vibration which his ear was quick to catch and his mind quick to interpret.

II. A HEROINE AND A HERO IN ISRAEL, Judg. 4: 1-10. Nothing is so monotonous as wickedness; it is virtue which brings interesting novelties into life. Here again we learn of the backsliding of the Israelites after their success under Ehud (the exploit of Shamgar seems to have been a side episode). No sooner had that judge passed away than the people returned to their idolatry, and forsook their

God who had saved them.

2. As a punishment **Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin.** Jabin was a chief of the Canaanites, the ancient inhabitants of the land, having his seat of government at Hazor, in the land assigned to the tribe of Naphtali, in the extreme north of the country. His general was Sisera, probably a foreigner, who lived in Harosheth-of-the-
Foreigners, on the



Chariots.

north side of the Kishon, not far from Mt. Carmel, where Elijah in later years was to win his great triumph over the prophets of Baal. General Sisera's headquarters were thus on the edge of the Plain of Esdraelon, by far the largest stretch of level country in Palestine, the plain over which the armies of Egypt and Assyria, of Greece and Rome, of the Crusaders and recently the British forces in the Great War,

4. And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

5. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

6. And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, *saying*, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?

7. And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots, and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

have fought some of the world's greatest battles. Sisera possessed nine hundred iron-bound chariots — low wooden vehicles, open behind, in which the warriors stood. These crude forerunners of the modern tank could be well operated in the Plain of Esdraelon. They constituted a sort of movable fort; and as they were drawn rapidly across the field, the warriors in them were measurably protected from attack, and could shoot their arrows and hurl their spears with terrible effect. It was not till the time of Solomon that the Hebrews themselves began to use chariots, and at the time of the judges the possession of these iron-shod chariots constituted the Canaanites a formidable foe. For two decades Sisera and his troops were able to lord it over the Israelites.

4. **Deborah means "a bee."** She is called a prophetess as Miriam was (Ex. 15 : 20) because God inspired her utterances. Huldah (2 Kings 22 : 14; 2 Chron. 34 : 22) and Noahdiah (Neh. 6 : 14) were others of the prophetesses. She judged Israel. She was not a judge in the sense of deliverer; Barak was technically the "judge" of his time. But she was a judge in the legal sense; her wisdom was so great and the respect paid her was so widespread, that disputes were brought to her to settle, and public opinion enforced her decisions. There were no law courts in Deborah's day, but such a custom made a very good substitute — while there was a Deborah at hand!

5. **She dwelt (margin, "sat") under the palm tree of Deborah.** Judges sat under trees in country places, and at the gate in cities, in each case for obvious motives of convenience. Deborah's palm tree was between Ramah (now called er-Ram), five miles north of Jerusalem, and Beth-el, about six miles north of Ramah. Rebekah's nurse Deborah was buried under an oak not far away (Gen. 35 : 8). In the hill-country of Ephraim, the Samaria of Christ's time.

6. **And she sent and called Barak.** This hero lived at the northern extremity of the country, at Kedesh in the region assigned to the tribe of Naphtali. The town is now called Kades, and it is about four miles from the upper waters of the Jordan. Deborah must have had considerable authority to summon Barak from such a distance. **Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded?** Deborah did not issue her commands in her own name. "The powers that be are ordained of God." Harmony with the will of God is the source of all true authority. **Go and draw unto Mount Tabor.** Tabor is a conical hill at the northeast end of the Plain of Esdraelon, southwest of the Sea of Galilee. Its flat top is 1843 feet above sea-level. North of Mt. Tabor the tribes of Naphtali and of Zebulun had settled, and they were to supply Barak with an army of 10,000 men; but Issachar, to whom had been assigned the territory south of Mt. Tabor, is not mentioned as having part in the levy, though the leaders of Issachar were with Deborah (Judg. 5 : 15). Perhaps this is because Issachar was not strong enough to seize its territory from the Canaanites, and so that tribe had become amalgamated with Naphtali and Zebulun.

7. **I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera.** The Kishon "is the second river in Palestine, and from the furthest of its sources to the sea is thirty-five miles long. With its tributary streams, which are small but numerous, it drains the Plain of Esdraelon and the sides near it of the hills surrounding. As a rule it is not deep nor wide, and is impassable in only one or two places. In the summer, parts of it are quite dry. The mouth is usually blocked by a sand-bar, which is only broken through when the stream receives the violent rain which falls at certain seasons. In the

8. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, *then* I will not go.

9. And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

10. And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

11. Now Heber the Kenite, *which was* of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, *which is* by Kedesh.

12. And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to Mount Tabor.

winter, and even more in the spring, the sudden rains convert an insignificant stream into a torrent and the surrounding land into a marsh. This was the river Kishon that 'swept them away.' " — *New Century Bible*. I will deliver him into thy hand. Deborah is not making this bold promise, but Jehovah whose command she is repeating. Whoever speaks for God can speak with confidence, though in his own strength he would be most timid.

8. Barak's unwillingness to go unless Deborah went with him did him honor. It was not a refusal of God's command, but a reliance upon it. Deborah represented to him the spirit of Jehovah, and he meant that with that spirit attending him he would undertake the great task, though in his own strength he felt absolutely unequal to it. This is the feeling with which all true heroes attempt their heroic deeds.

9. Barak's obedience to God's command was made doubly honorable by Deborah's prophecy that it should not redound to his honor: a woman was to take from him the glory of victory. The true hero never does his deed for the sake of the glory, but for the sake of the deed. He is seized by an ideal; in Barak's case, it was patriotism. For that ideal he will dare all and sacrifice all, heedless of men's thought of him.

Illustration. Thus General Pershing, that the cause of the Allies in the Great War might succeed, cheerfully placed his troops at the orders of General Foch, and even allowed them to be brigaded with the French troops. He would have magnified his own importance if he had kept himself at the head of an independent army; but he was entirely willing that his glory should go to another, so that a united control might more speedily win the war. Thus also Washington, in the Revolution, constantly fought losing battles and allowed his generals to get great glory by their victories. All he cared for was that his country should be victorious.

10. **There went up ten thousand men.** We learn from v. 12 that they went to Mt. Tabor, as Deborah had ordered. There they lay in hiding in the hills until the time came for the onset. **At his feet.** On foot, a weak force of infantry to oppose Sisera's nine hundred chariots and his great host of warriors. **And Deborah went with him.** The working together of Deborah and Barak is a capital example of co-operation. This principle was firmly implanted by Jesus in the Christian church. Peter added something to the band of disciples that even John could not have contributed, and Thomas and Philip, Matthew and Andrew, James and Nathanael, each did his share which the others could not do. Stephen, later, added his contribution; so did Paul; so did Mark, Luke, Apollo, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Lydia, Phœbe, and a host of others. Through all the ages the church has grown by the Deborah-Barak principle of co-operation. The women in their mission circles and the "Ladies' Aid," the boys and girls in their Christian Endeavor societies, Epworth Leagues, and Baptist Unions, reënforce the work of the men. All have a share in the building of the walls of the New Jerusalem.

III. **GOD GIVES VICTORY TO HIS PEOPLE**, Judg. 4: 11-24. The battle of the Kishon was evidently a very important battle; judging from the numbers of troops on both sides, and the decisive results of the fighting; yet few definite details are given us. We read that Sisera learned of the concentration of the Israelites at

13. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, *even* nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.

14. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

15. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all *his* chariots, and all *his* host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on his feet.

16. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; *and* there was not a man left.

Mt. Tabor, and rapidly brought up his army with the nine hundred iron chariots, drawing it from a wide range reaching from the Jordan to the Kishon and Mt. Carmel.

14. Up; for this is the day. "Der Tag," "the Day," was the time eagerly anticipated by the German army officers for their advance against France. They had been making preparations for a generation, and were longing to try them out. That was an evil day; but in a good sense every Christian should anticipate with great desire the day of his embarking on some notable service for the Master. If it is the work God has marked out for him, the day fixed for it will be the day of triumphant realization and of noble reward. He may be as sure as Barak that all difficulties will vanish before him, and that God will deliver into his hand all enemies that oppose God's will. Is not **Jehovah gone out before thee**? Jehovah goes before all the forces that he sends forth, to clear obstacles out of their path, to beat down their enemies, to prepare their triumph. All obedient souls realize that they are in the sweep of the divine victories. So **Barak went down from mount Tabor**, to give battle, on the Plain of Esdraelon below, to Sisera and his hosts.

15. **Jehovah discomfited Sisera.** The Hebrew verb means to fill with sudden terror and confusion. Josephus says that a hail-storm unstrung the bows and slings of the Canaanites and benumbed them with cold. In the most famous passage of Deborah's hymn (Judg. 5:20-22) a hint is given of the way in which God won the victory for his people:

From heaven fought the stars,
From their courses they fought against Sisera
The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength.
Then did the horsehoofs stamp
By reason of the prancings, the prancings of their strong ones.

The ancients believed that the heavenly bodies, the stars and planets and moon, controlled the weather. The Lord, through the stars, sent the rain, as Deborah sang. The rain flooded the Kishon, and the warriors of Sisera, who would have escaped from the plain into the hills, were caught by the swollen stream and swept away. This was the last battle of the Canaanites against the Israelites.

Illustration. Thus it was in the Great War, when the Austrians and Germans came down from the Alps into the plains of northern Italy, and were rushing on toward Venice in terrible force. They were repulsed, and in their retreat were caught by the sudden flood of the river Piave, and many thousands were swept away by the angry current.

Sisera alighted from his chariot, which could not travel except in the plain. He and his routed army plunged away through the highlands northward, closely followed by the triumphant Israelites.

Dr. John Finley, president of the University of the State of New York, was in Palestine during the battle of the British against the Turks on the Plain of Esdraelon,

and wrote for *The Atlantic Monthly* a long poem on the event. It contained these lines, with many references to the great battles of that famous plain :

"I have been in Armageddon's vale,
The Judgment Place, which John of Patmos saw
In his Apocalypse, — There have I walked;
There seen the Allied Men on horses ride,
Guided by 'eyes that were as flame of fire,'
Swift as these flaming eagles did they ride;
Swifter than Barak from Mt. Tabor's slopes
Rushing upon this plain; swifter than they
Of Gideon's band who swept upon Jezreel
From Mount Gilboa fronting this dread field,
Where kings and emperors through centuries
Have perished since the dewless, rainless days
When these same circling mountains mourned for Saul
And Jonathan, whom death could not divide."

THE STORY OF Jael. The Kenites (children of Kain) were a nomadic tribe, not belonging to Israel. Moses married the daughter of one of them — Hobab (called



Tents.

also Jethro), and gave him the famous invitation to accompany the Israelites up to Canaan (Num. 10: 29-32), "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Heber, a member of this tribe of Kenites, had separated from the rest of the tribe

who had settled in the southern part of Canaan (Judg. 1: 16), and had made his home in the north, by a sacred oak near Kedesh (Judg. 4: 11). In his flight Sisera came to the tent of Heber's wife Jael, who received him cordially, gave him a refreshing drink of milk, allowed the weary man to lie down, and covered him with a rug. Then, as he lay in deep slumber, she took a sharp-pointed tent-pin and killed him with it, driving it into his temple. Then when Barak came up in pursuit, Jael showed him his dead foe, and he perceived the fulfilment of Deborah's prophecy. None the less, however, Barak went on, or the Israelites without him, until by a series of victories the power of King Jabin, deprived of his general, was thoroughly broken and destroyed. The work of Deborah and Barak was accomplished.

IV. DEBORAH'S HYMN OF VICTORY, Judges 5. The magnificent poem known as the Hymn of Deborah is acknowledged by even radical scholars to be one of the most ancient specimens of Hebrew literature. It contains words so old that their meaning has been lost, and portions of it have never been adequately translated. Such songs were transmitted orally for many years before they were written down, and words had a chance to change their meanings, while numerous references would become lost or confused.

In spite of these difficulties, the spirit, power, and significance of the song are perfectly clear. It is a vigorous account of the events we have just read in prose. It is a noble hymn of patriotism. It is an anthem of "praise to the Lord" (v. 3), to whom the triumph is ascribed, at the same time that it glorifies Jehovah's human agents.

The hymn is full of phrases and sentences that have become proverbial: "a mother in Israel" (v. 7); "Lead thy captivity captive" (v. 12); "Why satest thou among the sheepfolds?" (v. 16); "There were great searchings of heart" (v. 16); "the high places of the field" (v. 18); "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (v. 20); "Curse ye Meroz because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty" (v. 23); "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord" (v. 31).

The descriptions are intensely energetic:

"At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay:
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead" (v. 27).

The frequent hammer-strokes of repetition add to the vivacity and forcefulness of the poem. It is a unique piece of work, and the writer was a poet of high order. It breathes an ardent love of country, and an enthusiastic devotion to God. Discounting the ferocity of Jael's deed, which for that age only increased the regard in which even the most religious held it, and the hymn holds much that inspires the patriot of to-day. We also are to be haters of evil. We also are to smite it to the death. And we also are to fight in the strength of the Lord.

ESTIMATES OF DEBORAH. "Like Deborah, let us learn to hate sin with a noble hatred. Like a Greater than her, let us learn to love the sinner with a nobler love."—*Rev. W. Mackintosh Mackay.*

"Would to God we had some Deborah or Joan of Arc to arouse the people of God to-day, and lift this old world out of its moral, social, and religious chaos."—*Rev. Len G. Broughton, D.D.*

"There is no finer poetry than Deborah's hymn."—*Rev. William H. P. Faunce, D.D.*

"Deborah was a woman so largely endowed by qualities of brain and heart, one too whose communion with God was so fervent and sincere, that she could not be limited to what is popularly termed woman's sphere."—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

"Deborah's patriotism is an enlargement of an anguished mother's concern for her distressed children."—*Principal Adeney.*



Deborah's Song of Triumph. Doré.

LESSON III. — April 18.

THE VICTORY OF GIDEON'S BAND. — Judges 7.

PRINT Judges 7 : 1-8, 16-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few.*
— 1 SAM. 14 : 6.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 47.

Additional Material for Teachers : Judg. 6 : 1-40 ; 8 : 1-35.

Primary Topic : GIDEON AND HIS THREE HUNDRED.

Lesson Material : Judg. 7 : 1-21.

Memory Verse : If God is for us, who is against us ? Rom. 8 : 31.

Junior Topic : HOW GIDEON WON A VICTORY.

Lesson Material : Judg. 7 : 1-21.

Memory Verse : 2 Chron. 20 : 15 (Fear not ye, etc.).

Intermediate and Senior Topic : VICTORY BY GOD'S HELP.

Topic for Young People and Adults : ONE WITH GOD A MAJORITY.

Additional Material : Gen. 6 : 5-8.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The younger classes will be interested in the story of the pitchers, the torches,

and the trumpets, and the teacher can easily pass on to a lesson on trust in God for the winning of their victories over temptation and sin. They have a

part to play, as Gideon and his men had, and they are not to wait for God to do it all.

The intermediate pupils should study the whole story of Gideon, beginning with the destruction of the idols. It is a good plan to divide the story into sections in advance and assign the sections to different members of the class for special preparation.

The older classes, who are fairly familiar with the story of Gideon, may review it briefly, and pass on to study the ways in which God, all through the ages, has transformed minorities into majorities, and made the weak triumph over the strong. Speak especially of some of the unpopular reforms of the present day.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Beecher gives 1323 B.C. for the date of this battle.

Place. — The battle in which Gideon vanquished the Midianites was fought in the valley of Jezreel (Esdraelion), which extends from Mt. Carmel to the Jordan. It is "the battlefield of Palestine," and has memories of Thothmes III. and Rameses II., of Barak, Deborah, and Sisera, Saul and Jonathan, Ahab and Jezebel, Jehu, Josiah, Holofernes and Judith, Vespasian and Josephus, Saladin and the Knights Templar, Bonaparte and Kléber, and lastly of General Allenby.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Chapters on Gideon by Rev. H. Elvet Lewis (in *Men of the Old Testament*), Alexander Whyte (*Bible Characters*), Hastings (*Greater Men and Women of the Bible*), Thain Davidson, D.D. (*Biblical Character Sketches*), H. W. Beecher (*Bible Studies*), M. B. Wharton (*Famous Men of the Old Testament*), Matheson (*Representative Men of the Bible*), J. R. Miller (*Devotional Hours*), Alexander Maclaren (*Expositions*), etc. Lang's *Gideon and the Judges*. *Israel's Iron*

Age, by Marcus Dods. *Footsteps of the Flock*, by Morrison. *The World to Come*, by Wright.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Gideon compared with Elijah.
Gideon a study of faith.
The valley of Esdraelion.
The triumph of minorities throughout the Bible.
Surprise attacks in the Bible.
Gideon an example for leaders.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Tests and the Triumph of Faith.

I. THE PREPARATION OF GIDEON FOR HIS GREAT DEED, Judg. 6 : 1-40.

The Midianite oppressor.
The arousing prophet.
The call of Gideon.
The defiance of heathenism.
The proving of faith.

II. THE SELECTION OF GIDEON'S BAND, Judg. 7 : 1-8.

The cowardly sent home.
The leisurely sent home.
The valiant three hundred.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF A DREAM, Judg. 7 : 9-18.

"The sword of Gideon."
Preparation for battle.

IV. THE VICTORY AND PURSUIT, Judg. 7 : 19-25 ; 8 : 1-35.

Trumpets, pitchers, and torches.
"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"
"Why did you not call us?"
"Faint, yet pursuing."
Shameful refusals.
Fit punishments.
Gideon the judge.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Poems on Gideon's fleece by Thomas Grinfield, John Newton (in *Olney Hymns*), Cecil Frances Alexander. Carlyle's *Past and Present*, Book III., Chap. II., has an extended simile drawn from Gideon's fleece.

I. THE PREPARATION OF GIDEON FOR HIS GREAT DEED, Judg. 6 : 1-40. The great victory of Barak over the Canaanites was followed by peace for forty years, a whole generation. Then again came forgetfulness of the God who had done so much for the people, and the Israelites were punished by the attacks of the Midianites.

These Midianites were descended from Abraham's son Midian (Gen. 25 : 2), and were therefore kindred of the Israelites. They were, however, a fierce tribe of nomads, whom we find first near Sinai (Ex. 3 : 1 — Moses married a Midianite), but now find associated with the Amalekites south of Canaan and with the desert tribes east of Canaan. In great numbers these robbers overran the fields which

the Israelites had patiently tilled. The owners took refuge in the hills and in caves, and saw their crops and their cattle carried off, and the whole land swept bare as by a visitation of devouring locusts. "The description would apply almost equally well to the raids of the Bedouin to-day. Nomads prefer that settled peoples should do the work of sowing, while they reap the harvests. The temporary flight of the inhabitants to the hills and caves was repeated up to the time of the Maccabees, and is still common in Syria, in the Balkans, and elsewhere at the present time."

— *New Century Bible.*

In this time of terror, loss, and suffering God raised up a new deliverer, Gideon, the son of Joash, of the family of Abiezer, a division of the tribe of Manasseh, which dwelt on both sides of the Jordan in the regions of Galilee and Gilead.

Gideon was prepared for his great work: *first*, by the preaching of an unknown prophet, reminding the Israelites of God's kindness in the past, and charging them with base ingratitude, in punishment for which these calamities had come upon them.

Second, Gideon was prepared by the vision of an angel, sitting under an oak in Ophrah, a town probably near Shechem. There Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress, a shallow depression cut in the rocky soil. He was using the confined winepress in order to hide from the Midianites, for wheat was usually threshed on a flat rocky space exposed to the wind and open to the view. Thinking that the angel was only a man, Gideon spoke with him, unburdening his soul of his despair for his country. Noting the stanch muscles of the young thrasher and his manly speech, the angel bade him go forth in his might and deliver Israel. Gideon pleaded the poverty and obscurity of his family, but the angel promised to be with him; and when Gideon courteously set food before him, he disclosed his supernatural character by causing flame to burst from the rock and consume the food as a sacrifice.

Third, Gideon's preparation for his great task included the cleansing of his own home and neighborhood from idolatry. Working at night with ten servants, he threw down the stone altar of the local deity, the Baal of Ophrah, and cut down the wooden post set up by it, the Asherah associated with licentious rites. Then he built an altar to the true God and offered sacrifice upon it, burning the offering with the wood of the Asherah. Though it was done at night, this bold deed was brought home to Gideon, who was only saved from death by the stout defence of his father. "If Baal is a god," Joash said, "he can take care of himself, he can do his own punishing." This was good logic, and carried the day.

Illustration. "Let her ladyship now save herself," said John Knox, as he cast the wooden idol overboard. "She is light enough; let her learn to swim." After that, we read, was no Scottish man ever urged with that idolatry." — *Alexander Whyte.*

Fourth, Gideon was moved by an inrush of the spirit of God to summon his clan of Abiezer, with the entire tribe of Manasseh, and the near-by tribes, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, calling them to attack the Midianites, who had swept over the country once more from the east, had crossed the Jordan, and had poured up the Jezreel valley south of the Sea of Galilee, leading to the Plain of Esdraelon.

Fifth, Gideon seemed to feel some misgiving as he faced his great task, and sought for direct evidence of God's guidance. This God granted him in the sign of the fleece, left out all night. One night it was wet with the dew while all around it was dry, the next night it was dry while all around it was wet. God does not give proofs of this kind to-day, but he does make his presence just as manifest to the hearts of men in answer to believing prayer.



From an old print.

An Angel Appears to Gideon.

1. THEN Jerubbaal, who *is* Gideon, and all the people that *were* with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

GIDEON'S TRAINING. "A threshing-floor may seem a humble birthplace for a great reformation. But a manger was not too humble for a greater. And it is well that we should learn and relearn that the greatest moral forces have their source in common duties bravely done when the hour is dark." — *Rev. H. Elvet Lewis.*

"William Cullen Bryant said he thought of every one he met as an angel in disguise. We may go further and think of every one who comes to us as God himself." — *J. R. Miller.* We may all meet God as Gideon met the angel.

II. THE SELECTION OF GIDEON'S BAND, Judg. 7 : 1-8. In every great undertaking and in most smaller ones the leader needs helpers. The choice of these helpers is quite as important



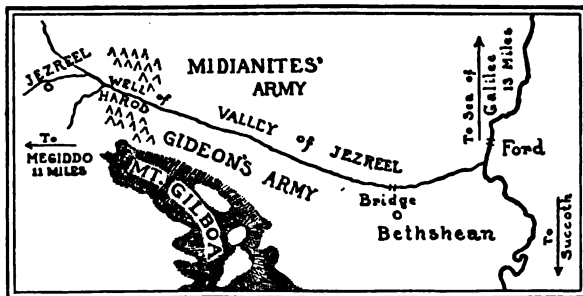
Gideon Destroys the Idols.

From an old print.

as the choice of the leader. Many otherwise admirable leaders, including several Presidents of the United States, like Grant, have jeopardized their success because of their selection of inferior assistants. Jehovah did not allow Gideon to make this mistake.

1. **Then Jerubbaal.** A name given to Gideon (Judg. 6 : 32) in allusion to Joash's argument, interpreted to mean, "Let Baal contend against him." **Rose up early.** Early rising is ascribed to many of the Bible heroes — such as Abraham, Hezekiah, Samuel, Saul, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Job, Mary Magdalene, the apostles — in important crises. "The morning hour has gold in its mouth" — gold of health and happiness and character as well as of material prosperity. **And encamped beside the spring of Harod,** a spring mentioned only here, now called 'Ain Jalūd, at the foot of Mt. Gilboa. **By the hill of Moreh,** now called Neby Duhy, on the north side of the valley of Jezreel.

2. **And Jehovah said unto Gideon,** by audible voice, or through a prophet, or by an impression made upon his mind. **The people that are with thee are too many.**



3. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

This is strange doctrine for our day, when victory is thought always to accompany the largest battalions, when heads are counted rather than weighed, and votes are reckoned rather than character. Many times, however, it has been found that numbers constitute a danger to a cause or an institution, begetting pride and over-confidence, and leading men to trust in them rather than God. It was such pride that Jehovah feared for his people, since they had proved themselves so prone to forget him and his aid, without which they could do nothing.

3. The first test in the sifting of the people was of their courage. All that were **fearful and trembling** were allowed to return home. The mention of Mt. Gilead is a difficulty here, since Gilead is east of the Jordan. It has been suggested that Mt. Gilboa is meant, as that was near at hand; also that "Gilead" is a corruption of "Gideon," and that the words originally were "and Gideon tested them," which would require only the inversion of two letters in the verb. It seems strange that so many as 22,000 of the Israelites should have accepted the invitation, and made this frank confession of their cowardice. The degradation of the nation from the days of Joshua is very plain. Contrast this with our army in the Great War. Repeatedly, when there was a call for volunteers for some especially dangerous exploit, the entire company stepped eagerly forward.

4. **The people are yet too many.** Ten thousand would be enough to make the people think that they had won the victory. The second test, therefore, weeded out all but the most alert, active, and ready. The ten thousand were to drink from



Gideon Choosing His Army.

Doré.

the spring of Harod, which means "trembling" — "Cowards' Creek," Wright translates it. In that hot climate the attitude of a soldier toward water was very significant and important. Those that knelt down leisurely and drank directly from the stream put themselves in a defenceless position with the enemy near, and showed that they were sluggish and had not a soldierly command of their appetites. Those on the contrary that merely stooped hastily, swept up a little water in their

5. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6. And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place.

8. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all *the rest* of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

palms, and quickly lapped it up, showed that they were hardy and could do with little water, that they were prudent, and that they were quick in thought and action. There were only three hundred of the latter, seemingly all of them Abiezrites (Judg. 8: 2), and they were the ones chosen to form Gideon's band.

Illustration. Inglis, in *Bible Illustrations from the New Hebrides*, speaks of seeing the natives drink by stooping till their heads were within eighteen inches or so of the water, then throwing the water into the mouth with the hand as fast as a dog could lap, looking just like the lapping of a dog. And "it was the strong, vigorous, and energetic who drank water in this way; never the feeble, lazy, or easy-going."

How GOD'S HEROES ARE CHOSEN. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait" is the New Testament equation of the scene by Harod's well." — Rev. H. Elvet Lewis.

Illustration. It is said that Alexander the Great, when in the desert with his soldiers, was parched with thirst. A helmet full of water was handed him and he was about to drink when he saw his soldiers looking eagerly at the water. Instantly Alexander handed it back, refusing to enjoy a blessing that all his men could not share with him.

"We should all like to be judged by our few splendid hours. But it is not in our dreams we are ourselves. It is in the playground, in the schoolroom, around the fire, at the dinner-table." — Morrison. God chooses his heroes by their daily, common acts.

"Who ordered Gideon forth
To storm the invader's camp,
With arms of little worth,
A pitcher and a lamp?
The trumpets made his coming known,
And all the host was overthrown.

"Oh! I have seen the day
When with a single word,
God helping me to say,
'My trust is in the Lord,'
My soul hath quelled a thousand foes,
Fearless of all that could oppose.

"But unbelief, self-will,
Self-righteousness and pride,
How often do they steal
My weapon from my side!
Yet David's Lord and Gideon's Friend
Will help his servant to the end."

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF A DREAM, Judg. 7: 9-18. Throughout the story of Gideon we see that the hero is a remarkable compound of prudence and boldness. "Be sure you are right and then go ahead" might be said to be his motto. It is a good motto, for heroism is a far remove from foolhardiness, and bravery is none the worse for coolness and foresight. Our Lord himself bade us count the cost before building and count our soldiers and our enemies before advancing.

9. Get thee down into the camp. Jehovah promised success to Gideon if he should make a night attack at once; but he did not overburden Gideon's faith, he offered him the alternative of a night reconnoissance which would encourage him. Gideon was no Jonathan (1 Sam. 14), and he chose the reconnoissance. Like David at Ziph (1 Sam. 26), Gideon took a companion and went down from the hills into the camp of his enemies, the Midianites.

16. And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.

17. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be, *that* as I do, so shall ye do.

18. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword* of the LORD, and of Gideon.

12. Midianites . . . like locusts for multitude; and their camels . . . as the sand. Gideon, traversing the vast encampment, realized what a tremendous task he had before him, and his heart may have quailed; but he was also to realize that with God's help even this great victory could be accomplished. It does no harm for a child of God to see that he is confronted by the humanly impossible, for with God all things are possible.

13. A man telling a dream. "Every dream in olden time had its meaning, and was in some sort a message from the Deity." — *New Century Bible*. Gideon overheard the account of a dream that was full of significance. The cake of barley bread was a flat round cake such as nomads use. Its tumbling into the camp of the Midianites signified an attack from without. Its rolling on its edge like a wheel, striking against the dreamer's tent, and turning it upside down, signified that the attack would be successful. Most of all, the ready answer of the other Midianite that the dream meant a successful attack by Gideon showed the listener that his name was known to the Midianites and that they feared him. Moreover, the coincidence that Gideon himself should be at hand to hear all this showed him that Jehovah was in the matter and was guiding his destiny. Nothing could have been imagined more encouraging to the young hero.

15. Gideon . . . worshipped. Surrounded by deadly foes as he was, Gideon bowed himself to the earth in recognition of God's presence, inspiring the dream and its interpretation. He could say with Jacob at Beth-el, "Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not" (Gen. 28 : 16). God's children are known by this prompt realization of God's presence, in the wonders of nature and the marvels of providence. Arise; for Jehovah hath delivered. Gideon proposed to take no credit for the coming victory; it all belonged to God.

16. He divided the three hundred men into three companies. They were to come upon the Midianites from three directions, so that the enemy would think they were surrounded by a great host. Saul used the same device against the Ammonites, 1 Sam. 11 : 11. Similarly when, in the Revolutionary War, the men of Truro on Cape Cod saw a hostile British ship approach the town, though they were only a handful, they marched that handful of men over a hill, in view of the British, then, screened by a sand dune, they marched back of the same hill and over it again, doing this so often that the British thought the town defended by a considerable force and so sailed away. Trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers. "The pitcher was an earthenware vessel, with one or two handles, used for carrying water, and commonly borne upon the head or shoulder." — *International Bible Encyclopedia*. The troops that were sent home left with Gideon both their pitchers and their trumpets, which accounts for the number of these.



Trumpet.

(Made from a ram's horn.)

GOD STRENGTHENS FAITH. "The gentleness of God stooped to the feebleness of Gideon's faith, because it was faith that had striven even unto fainting." — *Rev. H. Elvet Lewis*.

"The same gracious willingness to help a tremulous faith, which carries its tremulousness to God in prayer, moves the Father's heart to-day." — *Alexander Maclaren*.

IV. THE VICTORY AND PURSUIT, Judg. 7 : 19-25; 8 : 1-35. Gideon did not procrastinate. He took immediate advantage of the timidity which he had discovered. He had waited only to be sure; when sure, he was as swift as lightning.

19. So Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands.

20. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal*: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

21. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

19. **In the beginning of the middle watch.** The night, beginning at six, was divided into three watches of four hours each, so that the middle watch began at ten. Gideon took advantage of the little confusion attending the changing of the guards, and made his attack then. The three hundred empty pitchers were smashed, thus making a great crash and at the same time allowing the blaze of many lights to flash out suddenly. The three hundred trumpets were blown with vigor, and three hundred triumphant shouts arose: **The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!** "Cromwell's Ironsides, who never were defeated, selected for their battle-cry, the cry which heralded victory at Naseby and Marston Moor, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.'" — *Wright*.

21. **All the host ran.** Panic easily seized these undisciplined troops, especially when they were affected by a vague fear in advance. So much of modern warfare is fought at a distance of miles that soldiers can remain cool and brave. Their nerves are tested, however, by "going over the top." Much of the terror inspired by the tanks was from the fact that they brought war to close quarters.

22. **Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow.** In the darkness and confusion each thought that his fleeing comrade was a pursuing Israelite, and struck out wildly against him. For like events see 1 Sam. 14 : 16, 20 ; 2 Kings 7 : 6, 7 ; 2 Chron. 20 : 23. The four places to which the pursuit extended probably were in the Jezreel valley, as the Midianites would naturally run in that direction back home across the Jordan to the east. Abel-meholah was Elisha's birthplace (1 Kings 19 : 16).

23. **The men of Israel were gathered together.** Literally, "were cried together," by shouting messengers. They joined the Abiezrites in the pursuit — their kinsmen of Manasseh and two tribes that bordered on the plain of Jezreel, Asher and Naphtali. Zebulun had made a part of the original army (Judg. 6 : 35), but, strangely enough, Issachar is not mentioned, though the battle was fought in the territory of that tribe.

24. **Took before them the waters,** the fords of the Jordan, especially that at Beth-barah, the location of which is unknown. The Midianites were evidently turning down the Jordan valley, and to prevent their escape the fords of the Jordan would need to be guarded by a body far larger than Gideon's three hundred. Gideon assigned this task to the men of Ephraim (modern Samaria), whose territory bordered the Jordan below Manasseh. The Ephraimites moved so quickly that they captured and slew two of the Midianite princes, who gave their names to a rock and a winepress in that region.

FLAWS IN GIDEON'S TRIUMPH. 1. *The fault-finding of Ephraim* (Judg. 8 : 1) was unreasonable. They, the proud and powerful tribe, would not have come if Gideon had summoned them. "No leader born of the poor tribe of Manasseh would have recommended himself to them — except in the brilliant noon of victory." — *Rev. H. Elvel Lewis*. Gideon's humble answer was a wise one.

2. *The hard hearts of Succoth and Peniel.* These places were east of the Jordan, near the river Jabbok where Jacob struggled with the angel. The Midianites had effected a crossing of the Jordan and Gideon and his three hundred followed, "faint yet pursuing." When he asked food from the men of these towns, they taunted him with his failure to capture the Midianite chiefs, and refused his request. Gideon went on, captured the chiefs, then returned and punished Succoth and Peniel as they richly deserved.

3. *The temptation of power.* Moved by his brilliant exploits, the Israelites approached Gideon and for the first time in history proposed an hereditary monarchy. Gideon's refusal was prompt and was based on the will of God. "Jehovah shall

rule over you," he said (Judg. 8 : 23). "In such a dizzy moment Rienzi fell in Rome; Gideon stood." — *Rev. H. Elvet Lewis*.

4. *The temptation of wealth.* Alas, that Gideon did not so successfully stand the next allurements, that of riches! Rewarded with the golden earrings of the slain Midianites, and nearly seventy pounds of gold, besides the golden plates in crescent form which the Midianites wore around their necks, golden pendants, valuable purple garments, and silver-mounted collars of camels, of these Gideon made an ephod, either an image, or a rich facsimile of the high-priest's sacred garment. Whatever it was, he hung it up in his home at Ophrah, and it became an object of worship, thus negating Gideon's own work, the destruction of the Baal and Asherah.

Illustration. A writer has fancied that Gideon's mother took the fleece of the miracle at the opening of Gideon's career and made a mantle which he wore under his armor in all his battles and got good courage from it. But Dr. Whyte says that from the day when Gideon put on his golden ephod, this mantle his mother had made for him ceased to have its influence for good.

5. *The temptation of sensual indulgence.* Gideon had many wives, who bore him seventy sons, besides Abimelech, who after Gideon's death slew all his brothers but the youngest, Jotham, reigned iniquitously for three years, and finally met a violent death. Thus Gideon's sin of polygamy was punished. "The desecrated hearth is always defenceless. We may possibly say that the age permitted it; but Heaven, in his as in David's case, openly rebuked it, flinging judgment after judgment on the unkept hearth." — *Rev. H. Elvet Lewis*. How honest is the Bible, thus exposing the weakness and sins of some of its greatest heroes!

THE GREATNESS OF GIDEON. "In Gideon we have reached the climax of the period. There is a sweetness and nobleness blended with his courage such as lifts us into a higher region; something of the past greatness of Joshua, something of the future grace of David." — *Hastings*.

"He is not unworthy of a place among the champions, the liberators, the protectors, whom history has immortalized. His life and daring form one of the most interesting pages in the records of faith." — *Lang*. See Heb. 11 : 32.

"There is far too much trimming and seesawing in our day; the age wants men of stern fidelity to God and his cause." — *Davidson*.

"I would call Gideon an inverted Elijah. Elijah begins in full flame and gradually mellows down; Gideon begins in trembling and gradually gathers heat." — *George Matheson*.

"We should all of us be hoping, like Gideon, to work some deliverance in the earth before we leave it." — *Marcus Dods*.

"Once for the least of children of Manasses
God had a message and a deed to do,
Wherefore the welcome that all speech surpasses
Called him and hailed him greater than he knew;
Asked him no more, but followed him and found him,
Filled him with valor, slung him with a sword,
Bade him go on until the tribes around him
Mingled his name with naming of the Lord." — *F. W. H. Myers*.

LESSON IV. — April 25.

RUTH'S WISE CHOICE. — Ruth 1.

PRINT Ruth 1 : 14-22.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* — RUTH 1 : 16.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 91.

Additional Material for Teachers : Ruth 2 : 1-4 : 22.

Primary Topic : THE STORY OF RUTH.

Lesson Material : Ruth 1 and 2.

Memory Verse : Let us love one another : for love is of God. 1 John 4 : 7.

Junior Topic : RUTH AND NAOMI.

Lesson Material : Ruth 1 : 1-22.

Memory Verse : Ruth 1 : 16.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : LIFE DECISIONS.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE POWER OF PERSONAL INFLUENCE.

Additional Material : Matt. 5 : 13-16 ; 2 Cor. 3 : 2, 3.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The younger classes will be taught to see in Ruth a lovely illustration of the performance of duty toward the aged and the rewards it brings, a lesson greatly needed by the young.

The intermediate pupils will need to have the same lesson brought out, and also will be profited by a study of Ruth as illustrating the great question of wise decisions for life.

The older classes will find in the lesson some strong teachings regarding the right relations between rich and poor, employer and employees; also regarding respect for law; also regarding duty to one's kindred; also concerning the care of the old. Ruth is a book full of charm and wisdom for all ages.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The fact that Ruth was the great-grandmother of David makes it fairly certain (Hastings) that the events of this book took place when Eli was judge, or about B.C. 1173 (Beecher).

Place. — The parting between Orpah and Naomi may have taken place (Hastings) at the Ford of the Arnon, on the northern boundary of the Field of Moab, or perhaps when they reached the Fords of the Jordan, the eastern boundary of Judah. The scene of the rest of the story is Bethlehem, five miles south of Jerusalem, the town which was to become the birthplace of Ruth's great descendants, David and Jesus. "Then, as now, the single street of Bethlehem ran along the double crest of the white chalk ridge, 2500 feet above the sea; its slopes terraced into hanging gardens, with rows of olives and vines; a pleasant valley lying underneath on three sides, musical with the sound of brooks, though its eastern end is almost touched by the terrible wilderness of Judah." — *Cunningham Geikie*.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: Ruth's Wise Decision, and Ours.

I. RUTH AND ORPAH: THEIR ALTERNATIVES, Ruth 1: 1-13.

Famine, exile, and grief.
Naomi's decision.
Naomi's unselfish proposal.

II. THE TWO DECISIONS, Ruth 1: 14-18.

Weeping and leaving.
Weeping and cleaving.
Our decisions.

III. RUTH THE GLEANER, Ruth 1: 19-22; 2: 1-23.

Her courage.
Her industry.
Her modesty.

IV. RUTH THE HAPPY WIFE, Ruth 3: 1-4: 22.

A brave petition.
Boaz the honorable.
The ancestress of David and of Christ.
Lessons from Ruth.

THE ROUND TABLE.**FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.**

The character and purpose of the book of Ruth.
Ruth compared with Esther.
Naomi compared with Hannah.
Notable parting scenes in the Bible.
Great decisions in the Bible.
The character of Boaz.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Hastings's *Greater Men and Women of the Bible*, Vol. III. Rankin's *Character Studies in the Old Testament*. Matheson's *Representative Women of the Bible*. Armstrong Black's *Ruth: a Hebrew Idyl*. Broughton's *Representative Women of the Bible*. *Ruth and Esther*, by William M. Taylor. "Ruth the Gleaner," by Prof. R. G. Moulton, in *Women of the Bible* (Harper's). Whyte's *Bible Characters, Gideon to Absalom*. Hastings's *Great Texts of the Bible* on Ruth 1: 16, 17 and 2: 4. *Jesus in the Cornfield*, by Hugh Macmillan. Lewis's *Sermons Preached in England*. Mackay's *The Woman of Tact*. John Foster's noble book, *Decision of Character*. Wharton's *Famous Women of the Old Testament*. *Bible Partings*, by E. J. Hasell.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

"Boaz and the Reapers," a poem by James Drummond Burns. "Ruth," a famous poem by Thomas Hood. A reference in Dante's *Paradise*, XXXII., 7-9. Another reference in "Ode to a Nightingale," by Keats. Poems by Mrs. E. H. J. Cleveland, Fanny Crosby, Charles D. Bell.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Two drawings by Bida in the Luxembourg. "Ruth and Naomi," by Philip H. Calderon, Madame Bouguereau (Boston), Hübner (National Gallery, Berlin), Murillo (Earl of Radnor). "Ruth Gleaning," by Bruck-Lajos, Cabanel (New York), Vandyck (Louvre). "Ruth and Boaz," by Cabanel (New York) and Poussin (Louvre).

I. RUTH AND ORPAH : THEIR ALTERNATIVES, Ruth 1 : 1-13. THE BOOK OF RUTH. This little book is one of a collection of five short works called "the five rolls," the others being the Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther. These "five rolls" belong to the third of the three divisions of the Bible as the Jews arranged it : the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings ; the other "Writings" were the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. Ruth was read in the synagogues every year at the Feast of Weeks.

We do not know the author of the book of Ruth, nor the date. It tells a story of the period of the Judges, which extended over three and a half centuries. The book of Judges is full of war and commotion and Ruth is a peaceful idyl, but between the wars there were many intervals of peace when these events might have occurred.

The story of Ruth is of special importance because it gives the ancestry of David, the ancestor of Christ. It is of special interest also because of the prominence it thus gives to a Moabitess, in spite of the fact that, on account of their unkind treatment of the Israelites as they went up from Egypt to Canaan, Moabites to the tenth generation were forbidden to enter the Hebrew religious assemblies (Deut. 23 : 3). Further it is of interest because it illustrates the duty of the nearest relative to marry the widow of a man who has died without male children.

But the beauty of the character of Ruth, the charm of her simple story, are enough in themselves to account for the popularity of this little book. It is the loveliest narrative in the Old Testament, which abounds in beautiful stories. Merely as a piece of literature, it is perfect and priceless.

"Between the books of Judges and Samuel, full of war and tumult, is the book of Ruth, as a beautiful valley full of flowers and fertile fields and with a gentle brook singing down through the meadows is often found between two mountain ranges." — *Hastings*.

"Dr. Wharton tells us of a distinguished literary man in England who was asked by some young ladies to read to them the most touching story he had ever seen. Substituting modern names for the real ones he read to them the story of Ruth. They were perfectly delighted with the story, said it was the finest they had ever heard, and asked who was the author." — *Broughton*.

"This is the only book of the Bible which is devoted to the domestic history of a woman, and that woman a stranger in Israel. But that woman was the Mary of the Old Testament." — *Edersheim*.

"A man of practical life, a great man but purely a man of the world, once said to me : 'If I could enact one statute for all the women of America, it would be that each of them should read the book of Ruth once a month.'" — *A. Lewis*.

1. In the days when the judges judged. Ruth became the great-grandmother of David, so that her story must belong to the close of the period of the judges, which extended from B.C. 1450 to B.C. 1102. There was a famine in Palestine. Modern civilization, with its telegraphs, railroads, and steamboats, has conquered famine for itself, rendering the surplus of one part of the world available for the failure of crops in another part, though still the largely populated and backward nations suffer severely from hunger. But all the world, in ancient days, was in frequent peril of famine, and this terrible scourge often afflicted ancient Palestine. See Gen. 12 : 10 ; 26 : 1 ; 41 : 56 ; 2 Sam. 21 : 1 ; 1 Kings 17, etc. A certain man of Bethlehem-judah, so called to distinguish it from the Bethlehem in Zebulun. Ephratha is the name of the district in Judah containing Bethlehem. This man, Elimelech ("God is King"), with his wife, Naomi, and his sons, Mahlon and Chilion, in order to escape the famine emigrated eastward across the Jordan to Moab, the high plateau 4300 feet above the Dead Sea. The Moabites were descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and so were kindred of the Israelites ; but they had quite lost their true religion, and had fallen away into idolatry.

3. Naomi's husband died. She had left, however, her two sons, who married two Moabite girls, Ruth and Orpah. Such a marriage was allowable (see Edersheim) in foreign lands, though not in the homeland of the Hebrews. But after ten years the two sons also died, leaving Naomi indeed a stranger in a strange land. She had learned that the famine was over in Palestine, and, old as she was, and very poor, the courageous woman made up her mind to walk home to Bethlehem alone.

7. They went on the way. This does not mean that the two daughters-in-law intended to go with Naomi, for the people of the East seldom say good-by in the house, but accompany a departing friend part way on his road. When Naomi

14. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15. And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

16. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

thought they had gone far enough, she thanked them for all their kindness to her sons and to her, and bade them each return to her own mother's home and marry again. Struck with pity for her loneliness, the two young women wept, and declared that they would not leave her. Naomi, however, insisted. If she had had other sons, it would have been their duty under the law (Deut. 25: 5-10; compare Matt. 22: 23-30) to marry Ruth and Orpah; but as this was impossible, and as the young men in Bethlehem would not be likely to marry women of Moab, and as Naomi takes it for granted that Ruth and Orpah will wish to have husbands and children, she persists in sending them back. "When we consider how dark and solitary Naomi's path must have been had Ruth yielded to her entreaties, it is hard to say which of these two noble women was the more generous and self-forgetting." — *Hastings*. "If we had more elder women like Naomi, we should have more younger women like Ruth." — *Alexander Maclaren*.

II. THE TWO DECISIONS, Ruth 1: 14-18. 14. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law. The Greek translation, the Septuagint, adds, "and returned unto her people." But Ruth clave unto her. Kissing and cleaving, the outward show of affection and the reality of affection! Naomi might well have spared some of Orpah's kisses if Orpah had had Ruth's fidelity.

15. Gone back . . . unto her god. While she lived with her husband and with Naomi, Orpah had worshipped Jehovah; but her worship had little conviction back of it, evidently, for Naomi expected her to return to her heathen god when she returned to her heathen home. Her religion was "in her husband's name."

16. Verses 16 and 17 are the most famous of this book, among the best-loved of the Bible. "They constitute the most determined, the most decisive, the most

unhesitating confession of love in all literature." — *Hastings*. It should be printed as poetry:



Ruth and Naomi.

Philip H. Calderon.

"Intreat me not to leave thee,
To return from following after
thee:
Whither thou goest, I will go;
Where thou lodgest, I will
lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
Thy God shall be my God:
Where thou diest, will I die,
There also will I be buried:
Jehovah do so to me, and
more also,
If aught but death part thee
and me."

"What a perfect little carol of love and duty to have been begotten without a moment's effort and flung to the

mountain winds! The story of Ruth tells where David got his poetry." — *Armstrong Black*.

Illustration. Dr. Wharton tells a story of Senator Foster, of Connecticut, who rose from humble birth to become a brilliant young lawyer. He was about to marry a society belle, but the night before the wedding she said to him, "I will go to see your parents once, but you must not expect one in my station of society to

17. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

18. When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

19. So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, *Is this Naomi?*

repeat the visit." Mr. Foster took his hat, left the house, and never saw her again.

Dr. Wharton also describes an eloquent speech in which Andrew Johnson answered a Senator who had defamed his own State of Tennessee. After describing the part which Tennessee had taken in the history of our country, he closed by saying, "Tennessee is my foster-mother, and with all the devotion of a loyal son I say to her, 'Whither thou goest I will go, thy people shall be my people,'" and he quoted the whole of the famous verse.

17. **There will I be buried.** The Hebrew family lived all together, father and mother, sons and daughters and their wives and husbands and children. So also they were usually buried in one place, and expected thus to be a united family in the next life. Note the expressions so common in the Bible, "were gathered to their fathers," "slept with their fathers." Ruth showed her devotion conspicuously by this surrender of her family burial place.

Illustration. A certain Scotchman, of whom Dean Ramsay tells, was in love with a housemaid, but afraid to declare himself. At last one day he took her to walk in the cemetery and, pointing with his finger, asked her the important question thus: "My fouk lie there, Mary; wad ye like to lie there?"

Jehovah do so to me, and more also. This oath is common through the books of Samuel and Kings. The form of the imprecation is vague: "so" may include any evil that God chooses to send; yes, "and more also!" "Ruth shows how instantly and entirely she adopts Naomi's religion by sealing her vow with the Hebrew oath and by calling on the God of the Hebrews." — *Hastings*.

Illustration. Philip Henry's advice to his children regarding marriage was, "Please God, and please yourselves, and you will please me"; his usual compliment to his newly married friends: "Others wish you all happiness. I wish you all holiness, and then there will be no doubt but you will enjoy all happiness." Ruth chose holiness, and so she chose happiness.

18. **She was stedfastly minded.** Ruth was of a very sweet disposition, but she had a firm will, as her mother-in-law doubtless knew. When Naomi saw that she had made up her mind, she ceased to urge her to return to Moab. They gave one look after the figure of Orpah, now far in the distance, and then with happy hearts set out together on the long road to Bethlehem.

NOBLE DECISIONS. They are strongly aided by friendships. "It was said of Thomas Arnold, the great English educator, that he first gained the boys' confidence in himself, and then on the strength of that led them to confidence in Christ. So here Naomi had unconsciously, by the silent eloquence of her character, led Ruth to confide in her; and then at the critical moment Ruth, through that confidence, was brought to decide for Jehovah." — *William M. Taylor*.

"The quality of decision is one of the most important a character can possess. There are at least three great choices which meet most men in life — the choice of work, the choice of love, and the choice of God — and each of these is mirrored in some measure in the choice of Ruth." — *Rev. W. Mackintosh Mackay*.

"We make choice of Christ's people when we choose him. We cut ourselves off from our old ties if they are not Christly, our old friendships if they are still in the old life, and we take Christ's people as ours henceforward. If we follow Christ we must identify ourselves with his church and friends, separating ourselves from the world." — *J. R. Miller*.

III. RUTH THE GLEANER, Ruth 1:19-22; 2:1-23. 19. **They came to Bethlehem.** It was a walk of about sixty miles, and they may have been six days on the journey. All the city was moved about them. In the abundant leisure and keen curiosity of the East news travels fast, and the coming of every stranger is soon known.

20. And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22. So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

20. Call me not Naomi, which means "pleasant," "delightful," call me **Mara**, which means "bitter," "sad." Thus Gideon (Judg. 6 : 13) caught up the common greeting, "God is with thee," and turned it back : "God is far from our wretched nation." **The Almighty** (Heb., "Shaddai") **hath dealt very bitterly with me.** Like many of us, Naomi saw only the bitter side of her life, and did not realize how much sweetness God had dealt to her in Ruth.



Ruth the Gleaner.

21. I went out full, having a husband and two sons, the height of a Hebrew woman's good fortune. **Home again empty**, for girls did not count in those days. **Jehovah hath testified against me.** Naomi, in her bitterness, thinks of Jehovah as a hostile witness in a law court.

22. **In the beginning of barley harvest**, which was in April. "Bethlehem is still 'the house of bread,' as its name implies, and the way to Bethlehem is still through fields of barley in April as it was in the days of Boaz. A quarter of a mile below the town, on the slope of the hill, the traditional site of the threshing-floor of the great Hebrew farmer is pointed out to the visitor." — *Hugh Macmillan.*

GO TO WORK! Ruth was evidently a very attractive young woman, but she did not rely on her youth and attractions, or think that she was brought into the world merely to be admired; nor would she shamefully depend on an old woman. She set a fine example to every young man and young woman of to-day by going promptly to work. She was "a combination of Mary and Martha."

Illustration. "Senseless pride keeps many a girl from joining the working girls' brigade. Not long ago I heard a young woman ask a girl if she worked, and she replied, 'Oh, no; now and then I get restless and go into the store for pastime.' Poor idiot; her feet were on the ground then." — *Rev. Len G. Broughton, D.D.*

Ruth chose the task that lay plainly at hand. Both custom and sacrificial law (Deut. 24 : 19-22; Lev. 19 : 9, 10; 23 : 22) forbade the too-close reaping of fields, and allowed the poor to glean after the reapers. Of this merciful custom Ruth took advantage.

Illustration. As I am writing this lesson I find in *Thrifty Magazine* a good example of the profit of gleaning even in our modern days of careful farming. Four girls of Stony Beach, Saskatchewan, Western Canada, asked a farmer's



Threshing Wheat.

permission to go over his stubble field with rakes and glean what they could. The girls worked steadily for four days, threshed their gleanings, and sold the wheat for \$315. Then two girls of Bountty, Saskatchewan, hearing what the first girls had done, made the same experiment. They gleaned one hundred and fifty bushels of wheat from one hundred and sixty acres of stubble, and sold the grain for \$331.50.

THE KINDNESS OF BOAZ.

A kind providence led Ruth to the field belonging to Boaz, kinsman of her dead father-in-law Elimelech. Boaz was a man of wealth and ability, a leader in Bethlehem. As he visited his field, he noticed Ruth and inquired about her. As soon as he learned who she was, he gave orders that special favors should be shown her, for he had heard of her faithfulness to Naomi. She was to remain in his field and stay with his woman workers who bound the sheaves while the men workers cut the grain. Boaz even ordered the reapers to pull some grain out of the sheaves now and then and let her glean it. At meal-time Boaz bade her share the bread of the reapers, their sour drink, and their parched grain that had been roasted on a hot plate. All this Boaz piously did for the Moabite in the name of the God of Israel, under whose wings she had come to take refuge.

In the evening Ruth, weary but rejoicing, carried to old Naomi an ephah (about a bushel) of barley which she had threshed out, and delighted her by telling the name of her benefactor, which Naomi recognized at once as that of her husband's kinsman. So Ruth continued gleaning in the fields of Boaz through the barley harvest, and then, two or three weeks later, through the wheat harvest.



Boaz and Ruth.

Doré

"O simple piety of early days,
When the kind master, 'mid his golden sheaves,
Greets in God's name his reapers, and receives
Their greeting in devout and fervent phrase." — James Drummond Burns.

BOAZ AND CHRIST. "It is not to be wondered at that the Church of Christ, with such a dash of romance and mysticism in her heart, should have seen in Ruth's husband, Boaz, a far-off figure of her own Husband, Jesus Christ. For she, like Naomi and Ruth, was disinherited, disconsolate, despised, forgotten, and without kinsman-redeemer in her famine and all her deep distress, when his eye and his heart fell on her in the field." — Whyte.

IV. RUTH THE HAPPY WIFE, Ruth 3 : 1-4 : 22. The *goel*, "redeemer" or next of kin among the ancient Hebrews, had many duties. If his poor relative was obliged to sell a field, the *goel* should buy it back ; if he were sold as a slave, the *goel* should redeem him ; if he were accidentally slain, the *goel* should avenge him ; if he died without children, the *goel* should marry his widow and rear children to receive his property.

Naomi doubtless knew that Boaz was interested in Ruth, but he was much older than the young Moabite, and there was a nearer *goel* than he, so he held back and Naomi decided to help him out. Therefore she sent Ruth to him at night, as, according to a custom still observed in Palestine, he slept beside the grain on the threshing-floor. Ruth virtually asked him to perform the duty of a *goel*, and he

was greatly pleased and flattered that she had thus honored him, passing by the younger men. "You are kinder to me even than you have been to your mother-in-law," he said to her.

"She stood breast-high amid the corn
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

"Sure, I said, Heaven did not mean
Where I reap thou should'st but glean.
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home."

— Thomas Hood.

But Boaz was honest and prudent. He must first see what the still nearer kinsman had to say about it. So he loaded Ruth with six measures of barley and sent her home.

The next day Boaz sat at the gate of Bethlehem, where matters of business were customarily transacted — and are still in the East. Waiting till the nearer kinsman passed by, Boaz summoned ten "elders" (heads of leading families) as witnesses, and challenged him to buy back Elimelech's land which Naomi had sold. This the next of kin was ready to do until told that with the land he must also take Ruth as his wife. Then he refused, lest the expense of supporting Ruth, or the fact that she was a Moabitess, should impair his own inheritance. Then, in token of releasing his claim, the next of kin took off his shoe as was customary (compare Deut. 25 : 9) ; on the contrary, casting the shoe on to something was a symbol of claiming it or taking possession (see Ps. 60 : 9).

Boaz thereupon was warmly congratulated by the witnessing elders, and the close of the book relates the congratulations which the women of Bethlehem heaped upon Naomi when Ruth bore a son to Boaz. This son was Obed ("one serving" — Obadiah means "a servant of Jehovah"), who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

LESSONS FROM RUTH. "In proportion as we draw near to each other in the holy communion and unforbidden love of earthly friendship, we lessen the distance between our spirits and their Original Source, — just as the radii of a circle in approaching each other approach also their common center." — *John Greenleaf Whittier.*

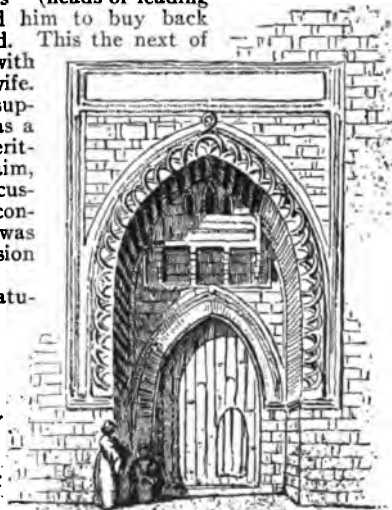
"The household of Elimelech were meant to be missionaries among the Moabites, and, in Ruth's case, the purpose was fulfilled." — *Hastings.*

"In the soul of Jesus the wedding bells of Ruth and Boaz are rung once more. Here again Moab and Israel meet together." — *George Matheson.*

Ruth's reward : the favor and home of Boaz ; becoming ancestress of the royal house of David ; becoming ancestress of Jesus Christ ; becoming the subject of one of the most beautiful books of the Bible. "The less we put our service for God in the form of bargain, the more likely are we to fare with special richness at the end." — *Rankin.*

"The story of Ruth is the classic instance of a friendship between two women. What David and Jonathan, Damon and Pythias, are for men, that for the other sex are Ruth and Naomi. And — strange contradiction to modern flippancy — it is the passionate love of a girl for her mother-in-law." — *Prof. R. G. Moulton.*

"Of the best kind of heroes there are few brighter examples, even in the annals of the church which numbers its virgin martyrs by the score, than this sweet figure of Ruth. She may well teach us to recognize the quiet heroism of many a modest life of uncomplaining suffering. The yielding birch tree, the 'lady of the woods,' bends in all its elastic branches tossing ringlets of foliage to the wind ; but it stands



A City Gate.

upright after storms that level oaks and pines. God's strength is gentle strength, and ours is likest his when it is meek and lowly, like that of the 'strong son of God.'"
— *Alexander MacLaren*.

"'Happy,' says Augustine, 'is he who loves his friend in God.' Happy, I would add, is the friend who is so loved. Let him only see that he loves in like manner; so shall he witness and share a greater happiness than that which Orpah missed and Ruth found with Naomi in the fields of Bethlehem." — *E. J. Hasell*.

LESSON V. — May 2.

THE BOY SAMUEL. — 1 Samuel 1: 24-28; 3: 1-21.

PRINT 1 Sam. 8: 1-18, 19, 20.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *My son, give me thy heart;
And let thine eyes delight in my ways.* — PROV. 23: 26.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 84.

Additional Material for Teachers: 1 Sam. 1: 1-23; 2: 1-36.

Primary Topic: THE CHILD SAMUEL IN GOD'S HOUSE.

Lesson Material: 1 Sam. 1: 21-28; 2: 11, 18, 19, 26.

Memory Verse: Serve Jehovah with gladness. Ps. 100: 2.

Junior Topic: A BOY WHO LISTENED AND OBEYED.

Lesson Material: 1 Sam. 3: 1-21.

Memory Verse: 1 Sam. 3: 9.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: TRAINING FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP.

Additional Material: 1 Sam. 1: 1-2: 21.

Topic for Young People and Adults: RELIGIOUS CAPACITIES AND TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

Additional Material: Prov. 22: 6; Eccl. 12: 1; Luke 2: 52; 2 Tim. 3: 14, 15.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

For the younger classes this is a famous and greatly beloved lesson. The principal teaching for them is obedience, and the honor and happiness that come from it — obedience to elders, to teachers, and to God. The ideal teaching for this lesson is vivid description followed by close application and loving questioning.

The pupils of intermediate age, though they also need this teaching and should have it, will be interested as well in the matter of Samuel's training. Here is the one who was to become one of the world's greatest men. Every pupil, boy or girl, can become great in the same way. Try to arouse noble ambitions and point out the way to achieve true success.

The older pupils and adults have here a lesson in which they should be taught to perceive the splendid potentialities of the children. Some are parents, some are older brothers and sisters, some are Junior superintendents or public-school teachers. They have in charge the Hannahs and Samuels of the future.

Try to fill them with zeal for their high calling as leaders of childhood to its very best.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Eli's faults and excellencies.

Hannah a model mother.

The evils of polygamy.

The probable structure of the tabernacle at Shiloh.

The children of the Bible.

God's ways of revealing himself.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Beecher's conjectural date for the birth of Samuel is B.C. 1171, and for his call, B.C. 1160.

Place. — The location of Ramah is disputed. It was in Zuph, a district named after Samuel's ancestor, and it is identified with the modern Beit Rima, a village thirteen miles east-northeast of Lydda; or with Ramallah, a village eight miles north of Jerusalem. Shiloh (modern Seilun) was about nine miles north of Bethel.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.**SUBJECT : Noble Parents and a Noble Son.****I. THE ANSWER OF A FAITH-FILLED PRAYER, 1 Sam. 1 : 1-20 ; 2 : 1-10.**

Elkanah and Hannah.
 Hannah's prayer misunderstood.
 Hannah's prayer answered.
 Hannah's thanksgiving.

II. A WISE FATHER AND MOTHER, 1 Sam. 1 : 21-28 ; 2 : 11, 18-21.

Hannah's love for her boy.
 Samuel's training under Eli.
 Children in God's kingdom.

III. THE BOY WITH WHOM GOD TALKED, 1 Sam. 3 : 1-21.

A puzzled boy.
 An obedient boy.
 An honored boy.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Poems : "The Presentation of Samuel," by Mrs. Hemans ; "Hannah and Samuel," by Richard Wilton ; "Samuel and the Voice of God," by James Drummond Burns ; "On Eli's Double Censure," by Francis Quarles.

THE LESSON IN ART.

"The Call of Samuel," the famous picture by Reynolds (National Gallery, London). "Samuel Taught by His Mother Hannah," by Rembrandt (Petrograd). "The Presentation of Samuel," by Opie, Copley, Burne-Jones.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Hastings's *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible*, Vol. III. Matheson's *Representative Men of the Bible*. Meyer's *Samuel the Prophet*. Whyte's *Bible Characters : Gideon to Absalom*. Morgan's *The Calls of God*. R. J. Campbell's *The Song of Ages*. Hastings's *Great Texts of the Bible*. "Eli," by Principal Rowlands, and "Samuel," by Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, in *Men of the Old Testament*. Chapters on Hannah, Eli, and Samuel in Whyte's *Bible Characters*. Deane's *Samuel and Saul*. Sime's *Samuel and the Schools of the Prophets*. Chapters on Hannah in books on the women of the Old Testament referred to in previous lessons.

I. THE ANSWER OF A FAITH-FILLED PRAYER, 1 Sam. 1 : 1-20 ; 2 : 1-10.
THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL. First and Second Samuel are only one book in the original Hebrew Bible, as are the two books of Kings and the two of Chronicles. The division was introduced into the Hebrew by Daniel Bomberg, a Venetian printer, in 1517. But before him the Greek and Latin translations of the Old Testament (the Septuagint and the Vulgate) had divided Samuel and Kings into four books of Kingdoms (Greek) or Kings (Latin), so that Second Samuel was Second Kings and Second Kings was Fourth Kings.

In the Hebrew division of the Old Testament into the Law (the Pentateuch or first five books), the Prophets, and the Writings, the book of Samuel ranks with the Prophets, so called because, though history, these books have a teaching purpose like the prophets. The Prophets are divided into the Former Prophets, — Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, — and the Latter Prophets, — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets. The other books of the Old Testament are the Writings (Hagiographa).

Samuel himself cannot have written the books named for him, because they relate the history of the reigns of Saul and David nearly forty years after Samuel died ; but Samuel is the great figure, not only of the early part of the book, but it was Samuel who crowned both Saul and David. These are the books of "Samuel the King-maker" (Kennedy), and Samuel's influence extends through all the record.

"In the book of Samuel we have all that the editors of the exilic and early post-exilic periods thought worthy of preservation regarding the greatest of the Hebrew kings (David), his predecessor, Saul, and the imposing religious personality who forms the connecting link between the monarchy and the period of the judges." — *New Century Bible*.

The books of Samuel are most systematically arranged, being divided into the story of Samuel and Saul (1 Sam. 1-14), that of Saul and David (1 Sam. 15-2 Sam. 8), that of David the king (2 Sam. 9-20), with an appendix of miscellanies (2 Sam. 21-24). At the close of each of the first three divisions is a summary.

The father of Samuel was Elkanah, who lived at Ramah ("the Height"), where Samuel was born, lived, and died. He was a Levite (1 Chron. 6 : 22-28, 33-38), and is called an Ephraimite ("Ephrathite") because his family lived then or had lived in Ephraim.

The mother of Samuel was Hannah, which means "Grace," the same name as the New Testament "Anna," the prophetess. Like Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, David, and Solomon, Elkanah was a polygamist. The purer teaching of Christianity was needed to break up the bad custom of a plurality of wives. Elkanah's second wife was Peninnah, which means "Coral" or "Pearl."

Samuel was born into a religious family. Every year, probably at the harvest Feast of Tabernacles, Elkanah took his family and went to the central sanctuary of the Israelites, to worship the Lord of Hosts. This was at Shiloh, the modern Seilun, in Ephraim (Samaria) about nine and a half miles northeast of Bethel.

But Samuel's mother was unhappy, "in bitterness of soul" (1 Sam. 1:10). As often occurred in polygamous families, one wife had children, that chief blessing in a Hebrew household, and the other wife had none. Hannah was left childless, and "her rival provoked her sore" (1 Sam. 1:6), taunting her and making her life miserable. Matters were not helped by Elkanah's evident partiality for Hannah, shown by giving her, for the sacrifice and the sacrificial feast, twice as much of the animal sacrificed as he gave to Peninnah or any of her children.

"Take it to the Lord in prayer." This is the thing to do with all troubles, and it is what Hannah did with hers. She must often have prayed over the matter at home, and it is natural that when she paid her annual visit to the Lord's house at Shiloh she should there present her eager petition for a son. There she repeated a vow, doubtless made often before, that if God gave her a son he should serve God all his days, and should be set apart by the token that his hair and beard should never be cut. This Nazarite vow included also abstinence from intoxicating drink and avoidance of defilement by a dead body — separation, strength, and purity. Samson and John the Baptist were Nazarites, as well as Samuel.

Illustrations. Samuel, next to Moses probably the greatest man of the Old Testament, was the child of his mother's prayers. "For weal or for woe a mother's influence is infinitely great. We are not surprised to learn that Byron's mother was proud, ill-tempered, and violent; or that Nero's mother was a murderess. On the other hand, we need not be astonished that Sir Walter Scott's was a lover of poetry; or those of Wesley, Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil, and others, remarkable for their intelligence and goodness. Like mother, like child. This is what led the good Lord Shaftesbury to exclaim, 'Give me a generation of Christian mothers, and I will undertake to change the face of society in twelve months.' " — *E. Morgan*.

Eli, watching Hannah, made a mistake. He was the high priest and the judge, the great man of his day. He saw Hannah's lips moving, but heard nothing. Silent prayer was not common in those days, but drunkenness seems to have been common even in connection with the sacrificial feasts (see Isa. 28:7; Amos 2:8). Rather hastily and uncharitably, Eli jumped to the conclusion that Hannah was drunk and upbraided her for it. Instantly, however, when Hannah made her dignified explanation, the old man changed his tone and promised her that Jehovah would grant her petition.

Hannah's thanksgiving must have begun at once, and continued all the way home. It showed itself, when her boy was born, in the name she gave him, for Samuel (Hebrew, Shemuel) sounds like the Hebrew verb *ask*, and so was understood to mean, "Asked of God." It showed itself most of all in Hannah's thanksgiving psalm (1 Sam. 2:1-10), a very beautiful hymn of praise to God, arranged in responsive lines, like all Hebrew poetry. The similar song of the Virgin Mary, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) is modelled upon this thanksgiving hymn of Hannah's.

II. A WISE FATHER AND MOTHER, 1 Sam. 1:21-28; 2:11, 18-21. Hannah did not carry out her vow to surrender her boy completely to the service of Jehovah until he was weaned, and we are not told at what age this occurred. "Hebrew mothers usually nursed their children for two to three years, but a period of five to six years is not unknown in Palestine at the present time. The longer period is suggested here by the fact that Samuel was able from the first to minister at Shiloh (1 Sam. 2:11)." — *New Century Bible*. All this time Hannah remained at home and did not go with Elkanah on his annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

24. *She took him up with her,* to Shiloh, the centre of Hebrew worship at that time. *With three bullocks.* One perhaps for the burnt-offering, one for a peace-offering, and one for the special sacrifice in performance of a vow. *And one ephah of meal,* that is, about a bushel. *And a bottle (a skin-bottle) of wine,* three pints of wine being required with each bullock.

25. And they slew the bullock, special mention being made of the one brought for the dedication of the boy. "We may try to picture the scene. Elkanah leads the bullock to the north side of the altar of burnt-offering, in the court before the door of the Tabernacle, and binds it to the horns of the altar. Hannah brings her



The Dedication of Samuel.

From an old print.

child, and lays his hand on the head of the victim in token that it is his representative; at that moment Elkanah or one of the priests slays it (Lev. 1:5). Its blood is sprinkled and its limbs burned upon the altar, as an emblem of the complete dedication of the child to Jehovah."—*Cambridge Bible*. And brought the child to Eli, that the high priest might receive him into the service of Jehovah.

27. Jehovah hath given me my petition. Hannah was not one of the many who, after they have received a blessing from the Lord, straightway forget the Giver of it.

28. Therefore I also have granted him to Jehovah; and it was to be a life-long gift; no "Indian gift," to be retracted. Note the "therefore"; Hannah saw a logical and necessary connection between the manifest

divine origin of her boy and the divine ownership of him. Is there not such an inevitable connection in the case of all that we falsely call our "possessions"? And he (Elkanah) worshipped Jehovah there, as head of the household. Then (1 Sam. 2:11) he and Hannah went back to Ramah, leaving Samuel with Eli to enter at once, young as he was, upon his work in the Tabernacle under Eli.

We have in 1 Sam. 2:18-21 a tenderly beautiful picture of the boy priest and his loving mother. The linen ephod which young Samuel wore was peculiar to priests; it hung from the shoulders and was fastened at the waist by a girdle. The high priest wore a distinctive ephod. In addition, every year when Hannah went to Shiloh for the annual sacrifice, she brought her boy a special kind of coat, a long upper tunic such as was worn by kings, prophets, and men and women of rank. Like Joseph's coat of many colors, this coat of Samuel's not only gave proof of his mother's devotion, but indicated that his lot in life was to be conspicuous and unique. "All his days the people knew Samuel by his 'mantle,' which was just his little coat made larger for a man. And he wears it to this day as he serves God beside his mother in heaven."—*Alexander Whyte*. "Whenever in the Old Testament you find the childhood of any character that figures in the drama elaborately described, you may take it for certain that the historians considered the man so depicted to be the maker of a new epoch."—*Elmslie*.

The work that Samuel did in the Tabernacle was varied. "He may have lighted the lamps, opened the doors and closed them, swept the apartments, and performed personal services for Eli. Children can begin very early to minister to the Lord."—*J. R. Miller*. They can begin by home helpfulness, just the sort of deeds in which Jesus was engaged for the first thirty years of his life. They have much to do also in the Sunday school and the young people's society.

CHILDREN IN THE KINGDOM. The way to get children into the kingdom of God is to set them at work for it, as Samuel was put to work. Dr. Smith Baker wrote most sensibly: "The old New England farmer's boys did not go to an agricultural college; but as soon as they were large enough to follow father into the garden and field they dropped beans and corn, and pulled the weeds from the carrots, and then helped to hoe the potatoes, and by the time they were sixteen they could take charge of the farm. In the home, as soon as the girls were large enough to follow mother round, they were given little lumps of dough to make bread, and little pieces

1. AND the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision.

of cloth to sew, and helped to wash the dishes and dust the chairs, and by the time they were sixteen they were fitted to keep house. They were educated by having something to do. When I was a lad my Puritan father had me find on the map where the missionaries were, and then he gave me a little piece of land in the garden to plant and get money for missions. It was a wise father's way of educating."

Children are put to much work in the church that was formerly thought impossible for them. For instance, the young people's society in many churches is given the leadership of the church prayer-meeting once a month, and the young people do it well. "A little twelve-year-old lad in one of our meetings rose and simply said, 'This is a good meeting,' and sat down. At once a leading man, one who had not been active in church work, rose and said, 'If I had commenced to testify for Christ as young as that lad, I should have amounted to something in the church.'" — *Rev. Smith Baker, D.D.*

A teacher in an English Sunday school asked one of the most mischievous boys he had ever taught, "What shall I do with you?" The boy replied, "Put me in the infant class." He was taken at his word, became a splendid assistant to the primary teacher, and now he is a foreign missionary. The same teacher tells of one of his Sunday school boys who sailed on a long voyage with a crew of sixty-five. Notwithstanding threats and ridicule this boy adhered to his promise to read the Bible and pray every day, with the result that when the ship returned fifty-six of the crew had become Christians through that boy's courage and example. Boys and girls can indeed do much in the kingdom of God.

III. THE BOY WITH WHOM GOD TALKED, I Sam. 3:1-21. We read (I Sam. 2:26) that "the child Samuel grew on, and increased in favor both with Jehovah, and also with men," words closely followed by Luke in his account of the boyhood of our Lord (Luke 2:52). At length the time came for his promotion from priest to prophet.

1. The child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah. Josephus says he was twelve years old at this time, the age at which in later times a Jewish boy became "a son of the Law," the age of personal responsibility for conduct. It was at the age of twelve that "the child Jesus" first went to Jerusalem with his parents and had his profoundly significant experience in the temple (Luke 2:42-47). The word of Jehovah was precious (rare) in those days. Only two prophets are mentioned in Judges (Judg. 4:4; 6:8). It was a time when religion was at a low ebb, which helps to account for the conduct of Eli's sons. There was no frequent vision. Whatever revelations of himself God granted were made at long intervals, because so few were ready to receive them.

Illustration. "There have been periods in all ages when religion was an empty form. Was it not so at the time immediately preceding the Reformation? When Luther visited Rome he found it to be the hot-bed of vice, and even the priests to be virtually unbelievers. The Pope himself was little better than the rank and file." — *Principal Rowlands.*



Samuel and Eli.

From an old print.

2. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;

3. And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*;

4. That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I.

5. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11. And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

2. **At that time.** On the memorable day when Samuel received one of these rare revelations of God's will. We have a touching picture of feeble age and vigorous youth. Eli and Samuel were lying on guard in the sanctuary. The time was near morning, for the lights, which had oil enough for only one night, had not gone out, but were burning dim. Eli had become blind, and Samuel slept near him, to aid him if he needed assistance. This blindness of Eli's helps to explain why the old man had to learn from others of the misdeeds of his sons.

4. **Jehovah called Samuel.** If the divine voice was audible, it was heard by the boy alone. And he said, *Here am I*. The common Hebrew response to a call; literally, "Behold me."

5. **And he ran unto Eli.** It is beautiful to note the lad's eagerness to serve his aged master and teacher. That way lies all success.

7. **Samuel did not yet know Jehovah.** This does not mean, of course, that the boy did not know about Jehovah and worship him, but that hitherto he had had no direct communication from Jehovah such as this.

8. **Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child.** The aged priest had had a long life of communion with God, and recognized with the third call the supernatural nature of the event; but it must have seemed strange to him that the Almighty would give this special communication to one so young. "As Samuel was prepared, so Samuel heard the voice; and as you and I live as it were in the presence of God, does God come to speak to us." — *R. J. Campbell*. "What higher service can any man do to his fellows, old or young, than to help them to discern God's call and to obey it? What nobler conception of a teacher's work is there than that?" — *Alexander MacLaren*.

10. **Jehovah came, and stood.** This time the Lord was visible as well as audible. *Speak; for thy servant heareth.* The answer which Eli put into the mouth of Samuel was a perfect wording of the lad's own spirit of ready and humble obedience.

"Speak to me, Christ, amid earth's sin and riot,

That I may hear

Thy Love's sweet pleading near,

Bringing my spirit quiet." — *L. MacLean Watt*.

11. The doom which Jehovah announced to Samuel was one which might well cause the ears of any pious Israelite to tingle with horror and dismay. The Lord would carry out thoroughly, from the beginning to the end, the threat made con-

12. In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

19. And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

cerning Eli's house by the prophet of 1 Sam. 2 : 27-36. The outcome was to involve the defeat of Israel by the Philistines, the capture of the Ark, the ruin of the Tabernacle, the death of Eli and his sons. No sacrifices or offerings would prevail to avert these calamities. And all these horrors would come because Eli's sons brought a curse upon themselves, and Eli did not hold them back from their wickedness. "Here was a terrible secret confided to an inexperienced child! The call had ended his childhood. Henceforth he was to know care, responsibility, anxious forethought." — *Deane*. "Jehovah knew that if any one was to hear and communicate the message, a child-prophet like Samuel would be most agreeable to Eli. Hophni and Phinehas would not be likely to touch a child so immediately under Eli's care as Samuel; but they might have no hesitation to put a man to death, if he dared bring the message to their father." — *James Sime*.

15. Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. He loved and honored the old man; he could not pain him so terribly. But Eli must have had an uneasy conscience, while at the same time he had courage enough to hear God's message. At least he could take his own punishment, if he was too weak to punish his sons.

18. Samuel told him every whit. A true friend knows when rebuke is the best kindness. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

Illustration. "I have known a malignant human being throw in the face of two poor broken-hearted parents the certain truth that their son had fallen into sin and shame, and been compelled to fly his native land, and I have thought that truth may sometimes be spoken in a way that shows the very spirit of the devil. But oh, how different it is if the truth be spoken in love, as St. Paul would have it!" — *A. K. H. Boyd*.

It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good. "Eli, with all his faults, was still at heart faithful to God. He submits without a murmur to the divine sentence, leaving himself and all his house in the hands of God. But it is the passive resignation of a weak character. Though he *submits* himself patiently to the will of God, he would not rouse himself to *do* it." — *Cambridge Bible*. His words were "as much as to say, 'I cannot help it; whatever the consequence may be, I am obliged to let matters take their course.' A most irrelevant, not to say impotent, speech for a man invested with supreme authority, and whom the arm of Omnipotence would have protected while he exercised it in the interest of righteousness." — *Principal David Rowlands*.

19. Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, as contrasted with the withdrawal of God from Eli and his house. This presence of Jehovah is expressly said to have strengthened the great heroes of Israel: Abraham (Gen. 21 : 22), Jacob (Gen. 28 : 15), Joseph (Gen. 39 : 2), Moses (Ex. 3 : 12), Joshua (Josh. 1 : 5), Gideon (Judg. 6 : 16), David (1 Sam. 16 : 18; 18 : 14). Let none of his words fall to the ground. The fulfilment of all Samuel's prophecies was one evidence that God was with him. Another token of God's favor was the wide spread of Samuel's influence, from Dan in the extreme north of Palestine to Beer-sheba in the extreme south. A third proof of the divine approval was the continuance of the audible and visible manifestations of Jehovah which came to Samuel, who transmitted the words of the Lord to all Israel. No longer was the word of Jehovah "rare" or the vision of Jehovah "infrequent."

OUR CALLS FROM GOD. "We are not all called to be prophets, but we are called, in our varying ways, to minister to the Lord; and we may learn from this story of Samuel how to recognize and answer our call." — *Hastings*.

We are called at unlikely times, when we are least expecting it, often when we are

alone and the world is still around us. We need to listen at all times for the voice of God.

"Not every soul may hear,
Yet to the listening ear
God's lips are ever near."

We may be called in many ways. "Whether God commands by a visible presence, or by a voice, or by our conscience, it matters not, so that we feel it to be a command." — *John Henry Newman*.

Sometimes we are called through losses and sorrows. "A great sorrow — like any other possession — is a great trust." — *Lady Dilke*. Often God speaks to us through the voices of true friends, through some noble book, through some earnest sermon. Very often he speaks to us as we are quietly reading our Bibles. Very often his Spirit works directly upon our spirits, with no intermediary. "Whenever you feel moved to do anything that is good, do it." — *Spurgeon*. That impulse is God's inner call. It is our life, our eternal happiness, to obey it.

"Still, as of old, thy precious word
Is by the nations dimly heard;
The hearts its holiness hath stirred
Are weak and few.
Wise men the secret dare not tell;
Still in thy temple slumbers well
Good Eli: O, like Samuel,
Lord, here am I!"

LESSON VI. — May 9.

ELI AND HIS SONS. — 1 Samuel 2 : 12-17; 4 : 1-18.

(May Be Used with Temperance Applications.)

PRINT 1 Sam. 4 : 5-18.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* — ROM. 6 : 23.

Devotional Reading : Prov. 4 : 10-27.

Additional Material for Teachers : 1 Sam. 2 : 22-36; 3 : 10-14; 4 : 19-6 : 18.

Primary Topic : GOD CALLS THE BOY SAMUEL.

Lesson Material : 1 Sam. 3 : 1-21.

Memory Verse : Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth. 1 Sam. 3 : 9.

Junior Topic : ELI AND HIS SONS.

Lesson Material : 1 Sam. 2 : 12-17; 4 : 5-18.

Memory Verse : Prov. 10 : 1.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : SOWING AND REAPING.

Topic for Young People and Adults : RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

Additional Material : Gen. 18 : 16-19; 1 Sam. 2 : 22-36; 3 : 10-14; 8 : 1-5; Eph. 6 : 1-4.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

For the very youngest classes, to whose uses the story of the evil conduct of Eli's sons, of the battle, and of the death of Eli is unsuited, the Lesson Committee has divided last Sunday's lesson into two parts, there studying the dedication of Samuel and his work in the sanctuary, and here studying God's call of Samuel. If the entire story was

used last Sunday, make this a review lesson.

The Juniors, however, are old enough to understand the lessons involved in the conduct of Hophni and Phinehas, and so of course are the Intermediates and Seniors. Bring out the great truth that whatsoever any one sows, either of bad or good, he is sure to reap. It is a lesson in true temperance.

For the older classes the very fruitful

and necessary theme, which grows most naturally out of this story, is the responsibility of children for their own development of godly character and for the happiness of the home, together with the responsibility of parents, brothers and sisters, pastors and teachers, for the children. It is a most impressive lesson in Christian education.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Professor Beecher's conjectural date for the battle at Eben-ezer and the death of Eli is B.C. 1142.

Place. — Eben-ezer and Aphek, probably towns in the plain of Sharon, which extended from Joppa to Mt. Carmel along the coast. Shiloh, about twenty miles to the east.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Great events in which the ark figured.

Other Bible accounts of evil children.

Other Bible stories of personal sin which brought national disaster.

The temperance teachings of the Bible, in outline.

How could Eli have obtained a reversal of prophecy?

Lessons from this event for the nations of to-day.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Poems: "On Eli's Double Censure," by Francis Quarles; "Ichabod," by

James Drummond Burns; Whittier's fine poem, "Ichabod."

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: "The Wages of Sin is Death."

I. BAD SONS OF A GOOD FATHER, 1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22.

Grafters, and worse.

Who are responsible for the children?

Many forms of intemperance.

II. ELI WARNING AND WARNED, 1 Sam. 2:22-25, 27-36; 3:10-18.

A weak expostulation.

A warning through an older prophet.

A warning through a young prophet.

"The nurture and admonition of the Lord."

III. PUNISHMENT AND SORROW, 1 Sam. 4:1-18.

The emergency that called for manhood.

"The wages — death."

More wages — loss.

More wages — woe.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Samuel and the Schools of the Prophets, by James Sime. F. B. Meyer's *Through the Bible Day by Day*. Deane's *Samuel and Saul*. Books on Bible characters named in recent lessons. A comprehensive and fresh manual of temperance facts is *Alcohol and the Human Race*, by Richmond Pearson Hobson.

I. BAD SONS OF A GOOD FATHER, 1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22. This lesson is the greatest contrast to the last. In that lesson we studied the training of a good son of good parents; in this we have the sad subject of the bad sons of a good father, and the ruin wrought by their misdeeds. The warnings of this lesson may be as effective as the inspiration of the last lesson.

12. The sons of Eli (Hophni and Phinehas) were base men, "sons of Belial," that is, of worthlessness, for Belial in the Old Testament is not a proper name. **They knew not Jehovah.** They knew him with the head, for they were instructed by Eli and were officiating priests; but they did not know him with the heart. They understood the law, but did not obey it. They had faith, it may be, but their faith was dead without works (Jas. 2:17).

13. The custom of the priests. The first sin of Hophni and Phinehas was that of greed and extortion. Lev. 3:3-5; 7:29-34 prescribe the share of the priests out of the animal offered for sacrifice. The fat of the animal was to be burned on the altar, and the breast and shoulder were to be taken by the priests. They were first to wave them before the altar in token of dedication to the Lord, and then they were to eat them themselves. But the greedy sons of Eli were not satisfied with this; they sent their servants to demand a further portion, and insisted upon having it even before Jehovah's share had been offered in sacrifice upon the altar. Thus they added impiety to extortion. No sin ever stands alone, but brings other sins with it.

17. The sin of the young men. Hophni and Phinehas were not boys, like Samuel, but were full-grown and amply old enough to know better. **Was very great before Jehovah.** It is God's view of our acts that counts, and not man's. Doubtless Hophni and Phinehas were hated and scorned by men also, but it was the disapproval of Jehovah that condemned them. **For the men despised the offering of Jehovah.**

"The men" refers to Hophni and Phinehas, who showed by their actions that they had no thought for God's honor and worship, but only for their own enrichment. When God's priests, however, thus slight God's service, it will not be long before others also come to despise it. "Like priest, like people."

22. Still another sin of the sons of Eli, added to the sins of greed, extortion, and impiety, was the horrible sin of lust. This sin was committed with the women who had some regular duties about the tabernacle. It was just such abominable acts as were committed in the heathen worship, but it was absolutely foreign to the pure worship of Jehovah. It was not an isolated sin, but was frequently committed, for the verse reads literally, "Eli *used to hear* all that his sons were doing," implying that the deed was often performed.

WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHILDREN? All that have anything to do with them, or can help them — not only parents, brothers, sisters, teachers, and pastors, but those that *should* teach in the Sunday school, or lead a Junior society, or be a big brother or sister to some neglected child.

"He who helps a child helps humanity with a distinctness, with an immediateness, which no other help given to human creatures in any other stage of their human life can possibly give again." — *Phillips Brooks*.

Rev. Frank Crane, D.D., says that after all the world has only one problem before it: How should we best transmit to children the fruits of our effort? How best, in education, put them in possession of the knowledge we have gained? In the church, how hand on to them the gains of our spiritual life? In art and literature, how pass on to them our visions? In business, how give them the products of our work? And so in government, in law, and in all phases of life.

Illustration. The easy-going but anxious mother of a two-year-old boy who was all the time running away complained to an old Scotchman about him: "I buttoned the gate, but he soon found out how to open it. I put the button higher, but he climbed up to it. I hid the box he climbed on, and he found another. I then put the button as high as it would go on the gate, and now he gets a stick and opens it. What shall I do?" The wise old man answered, "Put the button on the boy."

MANY FORMS OF INTEMPERANCE. The greed which Hophni and Phinehas exhibited was a form of intemperance; their lust was a still worse form. Drunkenness has been the great intemperance of our land; now, we trust, we shall be free from it. Gluttony remains, however, and this is a form of intemperance whose ravages are only beginning to be understood. Extravagance, pride, devotion to selfish ambition, the craze for power, all are forms of intemperance. So are the mad pursuit of pleasure, absorption in dress, love of money, even a passion for books or for work. Intemperance in anything soon becomes idolatry; it puts that object in place of God, and draws us from the following of the divine ideals. Some are tempted to one form of intemperance and some to another. If we are wise we shall recognize what our special temptation is, and conquer it with Christ's help.

The use of tobacco is a terribly common form of intemperance. Thomas A. Edison once wrote that the smoking of cigarettes "has a violent action on the nerve centers, producing degeneration of the cells of the brain, which is quite rapid among boys. Unlike most narcotics this degeneration is permanent and uncontrollable. I employ no person who smokes cigarettes."

A careful and conservative estimate made by a State authority indicates that there are in the United States about a quarter of a million "drug fiends." In fighting this terrible evil the forces of righteousness already have all the law they need; the drugs are proscribed, not licensed. But their influence is subtle and strong, and constant education against them is needed.

Illustrations. The saloon in the United States was put out of business largely by business men. An example of their methods is the electric sign over the entrance to the great steel plant of Gary, Ill.: "Did booze ever do you any good? Did booze ever get you a better job? Did booze ever contribute anything to the happiness of your family?"

A certain colonel who had been dismissed from the army for drunkenness came to Lincoln to be reinstated. Lincoln heard the man with much sympathy, for he knew that he had been a brave officer, but at the close of the interview he had to dismiss him with the sad words: "Colonel, you carry your own condemnation in your face."

When Grant was commanding before Vicksburg a number of officers were in his headquarters, and one of them invited the rest to join him in a social glass. Only

one officer refused, saying that he never drank. A few days later Grant sent for this officer, reminded him of the incident, and said, "You are the man I have been looking for to take charge of the commissary department," and he detailed him to that important duty, serving thus all through the war. When Grant became President, he found other important work for the officer who never drank. It is always such men that are wanted.

II. ELI WARNING AND WARNED, 1 Sam. 2:22-25, 27-36; 3:10-18. The fact that Eli was "very old" is mentioned as a sort of excuse for this weak father; but there had been a time when he was in his prime and when his boys were very young. Did Eli do his best then? "A stitch in time saves nine" is a proverb homely but true, and nowhere more applicable than in the making of character. It is further said that Eli had to hear of his sons' misdeeds through others, evidently not keeping close watch on them himself, perhaps because of his failing senses. But if Eli had kept better watch over them before he became so blind and feeble, he could safely have left them afterward to their own devices, for they would have been good and upright.

A WEAK EXPOSTULATION. In the pleading of Eli with his evil sons there is no righteous indignation such as a stronger man would have expressed. There is not even a hint of depriving them of their position as priests, which they dishonored—a course which Eli certainly should have taken. "Why do you act so?" is all that Eli can say; and he goes on to quote a popular proverb:

"If a man sin against a man, then Elohim shall judge him:

But if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall intercede for him?"

But neither the sad question nor the sage proverb moved Hophni and Phinehas. "Jehovah was minded to slay them," the stern account reads. We are reminded of the saying that God hardened Pharaoh's heart in the days of the plagues; but that was only after Pharaoh had hardened his own heart. God's doom was laid upon the base priests, but only in righteous confirmation of the doom which they themselves had definitely and irrevocably chosen.

"When barren Hannah, prostrate on the floor,
In heat of zeal and passion did implore
Redress from Heaven, censorious Eli thought
She had been drunk, and checked her for her fault;
Rough was his censure and his check austere;
Where mildness should be used, we're oft severe.

"But when his lustful sons, that could abuse
The House of God, and ill God's offerings use,
Appeared before him, his indulgent tongue
Compounded rather than rebuke the wrong.
He dare not shoot for fear he wound his child;
Where we should be severe, we're oft too mild."
—Francis Quarles.

A WARNING THROUGH AN OLDER PROPHET. The "man of God" who came to Eli to warn him of the dangers of his course with his sons (1 Sam. 2:27-36) was a prophet. The term is applied to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and others who lived close to God, did his deeds and spoke his words. This prophet reminded Eli of his descent from the first high priest, Aaron, and therefore of his supreme duty to guard the high priest's sacred duties and keep them pure. Because he had allowed his sons to desecrate the holy office, the promise that his family should hold their high office forever is withdrawn by the Almighty, and Eli is told that his house is to perish. The token of the ruin that is to come will be the death of both Hophni and Phinehas in one day. Only one man of the family was to be left, and that was Eli's great-grandson Abiathar, the high priest whom Solomon deposed and banished (1 Kings 2:27). But God's cause was not to fail, though Eli and his sons failed; God would raise up in Samuel a faithful priest, and God would build him a sure house.

A WARNING THROUGH A YOUNG PROPHET. All that the "man of God" said seems not to have changed Eli's weak course with his sons, for in the next scene we find the same warning repeated. Eli had evidently allowed the evil practices of Hophni and Phinehas to continue. He may have expostulated with them again; but if he did, it was too mildly to accomplish a reform.

Therefore God repeated through Samuel the same stern warning and doom (1 Sam. 3:10-18). He would give Eli one more chance. Perhaps the old man would be ashamed that he must be rebuked through the lips of a mere boy. Perhaps the repetition of the warning would stir him to action. But, alas! it was again in vain. Eli expressed his resignation: "Let the Lord do what he thinks best." Eli had no business to be resigned; he should have stirred himself to vigorous action.

And yet we must not forget that Hophni and Phinehas were old enough to know better. They had doubtless had good instruction and guidance, though it was not firm enough. Their father's noble example was always before them. They sinned

5. And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

against great light, and theirs, not sad old Eli's, is the heaviest blame. The best of men may be cursed with the worst of sons. And in one conspicuous instance Eli showed what he could do, for "who was it that trained Samuel, — the strong, powerful Samuel, who crushed abuses and corruptions, drove out idolaters, and won battles for Israel?" — *Professor Elmslie*.

"THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD" (1) begins in the hearts of parents and teachers; (2) begins as soon as the child is able to understand anything; (3) covers all the child's nature and interests; (4) gathers up what others have learned as to wise methods; (5) and above all depends on the love, patience, and wisdom which come only from the Holy Spirit, the great Teacher.

III. PUNISHMENT AND SORROW, 1 Sam. 4:1-18. Evil practices may continue for some time with no evil results that are apparent; but soon or late will come the emergency that calls for manhood, and the manhood will be lacking. Hophni and Phinehas, yes, and poor old Eli, were like a tree into which the borers and decay have been eating for years. The tree is fair and strong to the eye, but its trunk is only a hollow shell. A hard storm comes, there is a crack, a mighty crash, and the great tree lies on the ground.

1. Israel went out against the Philistines. These powerful foes of the Hebrews, unconquered until the time of David, gave its name to the Holy Land, for "Palestine" is only a form of "Philistine." The Philistines were Aryans, coming from Crete or southern Asia Minor. They were strongly organized under the leadership of five great lords whose seats of government were the cities of Ashdod, Ekron, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Gath. Occupying the coast from Joppa southward, they hemmed in the Hebrews from the Mediterranean Sea. It is possible that this war was caused by the tragic death of Samson. Either the Hebrews went forth to avenge their champion, or Samson's death emboldened the Philistines to attack the Hebrews. The Hebrews were stationed at Eben-ezer, the Philistines were at Aphek. The location of these towns is unknown; probably they were in the plain of Sharon, north of Joppa and west of Samaria.

2. Israel was smitten before the Philistines . . . in the field, the open plain where the invaders could use their armed chariots. There the Israelites lost four thousand men, but they were able to retire in good order to their camp and hold a council of leaders (elders), the formal executive body of the tribes.

3. Wherefore hath Jehovah smitten us to-day? The Israelites had had so many proofs that they could conquer if Jehovah was with them that they correctly ascribed any defeat to his opposition. We should do well to do the same. They were wise in looking carefully to learn the "wherefore," but they did not look far enough. They thought that a mere exterior was lacking, a mere box of gilded wood; they should have looked deeper and purged the people of sin. How often we ourselves make the same mistake! Let us fetch the ark of the covenant. The ark was the sacred chest made by Moses, containing the tables of the covenant (those on which the Ten Commandments were engraved), a golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The ark had led the victorious procession around Jericho (Josh. 6:6), and doubtless the elders remembered that event at this time. Perhaps the Philistines had brought their idols upon the battlefield, as they did at Baal-perazim (2 Sam. 5:21), and the elders wished something to set over against them. The superstitious idea would not have occurred to them if they had been living closer to God.

Illustration. "In the same manner a brigand might expect an amulet or charm to preserve his life, while violating the laws of God and man. Our only safety lies, not in an outward act or token, but in simple, pure-hearted and unbroken fellowship with God. Then we become invincible." — *F. B. Meyer*.

4. Hophni and Phinehas were there, doubtless as the bearers of the ark. Their presence alone would have prevented the Lord from honoring this use of the ark, which was the symbol of his holy presence.

5. All Israel shouted, for now they were sure of victory. "Israel" was the people's name for themselves; "Hebrews," in the next verse, was the name of foreigners for them. "Hebrew" is derived from *eber* (beyond), a name given because Abraham came from *beyond* the Euphrates; or from Eber (Gen. 10:21, 24), great-grandson of Shem.

6. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

7. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

12. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

7. **The Philistines were afraid.** "Observe how vividly the successive emotions of the Philistines are painted: *astonishment*, when they heard the triumphant shout of the vanquished army; *dismay*, when they learned its cause; manly *resolution*, when they had recovered from the first panic."
—*Cambridge Bible*.

8. **These mighty gods.** The Philistines were idolaters, and naturally ascribed a plurality of gods to the Hebrews. **That smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues.** "With an utter overthrow," it may be translated, for the reference is not to the ten plagues, but to the overthrow of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, on the border of the wilderness.

9. **Be strong and quit (acquit) yourselves like men.** Paul uses the same stirring words in 1 Cor. 16:13. The heathen origin of this slogan need not blind us to its magnificence. Let us imitate Paul and take it up into our Christian living.

10. **They fled every man to his tent.** Of course the Israelites were no longer living in tents, but this expression is a relic of their wilderness wanderings. It simply means that the Israelites were driven before the victorious Philistines in utter rout; it was every man take care of himself. Thirty thousand was a terrible loss for so small a nation; the killing of the sons of Eli would be felt, in spite of their bad character, as a national blow; but the Israelites can hardly have so far forgotten their religion that they did not feel most keenly the loss of the ark. To their minds, living evidently on the surface of things, it would signify that Jehovah had abandoned them to their fate. "Never had such a calamity befallen the people since they left Egypt. Their glory had departed; their political independence was in jeopardy; hopeless servitude was their future destiny." —*Deane*.

12. **There ran a man of Benjamin.** In our days of newspapers, of telegraphs and "wireless," it is hard to imagine the world when all news must be brought by word of mouth. Compare, for example, the almost instantaneous news of the end of the



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An Eastern Runner.

13. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching : for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

14. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

16. And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

17. And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

Great War, which flashed over the earth, with the sailing ship which Lafayette obtained in which to send to the United States word that peace between that country and Great Britain had been signed in Paris. It was about twenty miles from Ebenezer to Shiloh, and a swift runner would make the distance in four or five hours after the battle. The Jews have a tradition that this runner was Saul, who was of Benjamin, and that before setting out for Eli he snatched the tables of the law out of the hands of Goliath and bore them away with him! **With his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.** These were common tokens of great grief. So Joshua and the elders after the defeat at Ai (Josh. 7 : 6); so the runner who came to tell David of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1 : 2); and so Hushai when he came to David after the treason of Absalom (2 Sam. 15 : 32).



From an old print.

Eli Receiving the Sad News.

13. Eli was sitting upon his seat. Probably his official seat by the outer gate of the tabernacle enclosure, where he was wont to judge the people. It was not by the gate of Shiloh, for the news reached the townspeople before it reached Eli, and he heard the wails and outcries of the people, inquiring what it meant.

15. Eli was ninety and eight years old. The tragic effect of the account is heightened by inserting here this picture of the very old man, now totally blind, sitting there trembling in his anxiety for the sacred ark which had been taken out of his keeping. Doubtless Samuel, his sympathetic young attendant, was by his side, and we owe this account to him.

16. How went the matter? If Eli had been able to see, the very expression on the face of the woe-ful, blood-stained messenger would have told him of defeat, even without the rent garment and the earth on the head.

17. Israel is fled. The messenger leads up skilfully to his climax : the defeat of the army, the terrible number of the dead, the death of Eli's sons ; worst of all, the capture of the ark. The bringer of the sad news must have been a religious man and in sympathy with the aged priest, or he would have made the death of Hophni and Phinehas his climax of woe.

18. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

18. He fell from off the seat (which had no back), fainting away. Eli may have been expecting the news concerning his sons; their sudden death in one day had been clearly foretold. The loss of the ark, however, had not been prophesied, and it was the final crushing blow. Not only did it kill Eli, but the tragedy is deepened, for the account goes on to tell how the same awful news killed Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, and how her babe was named Ichabod, "No-Glory," for the capture of the ark took all the glory from Israel. "More than three hundred years before 'a cloud covered the Tent of the Congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.' This was the Glory that had now gone, not to return till a new site for the central altar was chosen, and a new palace for the departed Glory built (1 Kings 8:10), when once more 'the Glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.'" — *James Sime.*

THE WAGES OF SIN. A merciful prince once condemned his servant to death for a trivial offence. When a friend asked him why he was so severe the prince took a goblet half full of water and asked his friend to put an apple into it; this done, the water rose to the brim. Then the prince added a small coin, and the water ran over. "Why should the coin do more than the apple?" asked the prince. Thus God is long-suffering, slow to anger; but there is a point beyond which the wages of sin is death.

LESSON VII. — May 16.

VICTORY UNDER SAMUEL. — 1 Samuel 7:2-17.

PRINT 1 Sam. 7:2-12.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only.*
— 1 SAM. 7:3.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 55.

Additional Material for Teachers: 1 Sam. 6:19-7:1; 8:1-3.

Primary Topic: A BOY WHO BECAME A USEFUL MAN.

Lesson Material: 1 Sam. 7:2-17.

Memory Verse: Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him. 1 Sam. 3:19.

Junior Topic: A GREAT LEADER PRAYING.

Lesson Material: 1 Sam. 7:2-17.

Memory Verse: Jas. 5:16.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: VICTORY THROUGH PRAYER.

Additional Material: Luke 22:39-46.

Topic for Young People and Adults: QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP.

Additional Material: Ex. 18:13-26; Josh. 1:5-9; Acts 6:1-7.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The Younger Classes. — In the Primary and Junior classes the emphasis will wisely be placed, not on the battle but on the prayer of Samuel. Make this a lesson in prayer. The children have their troubles which are as real and as urgent to them as the attack of the Philistines was to the Israelites. Teach them that God is as ready to

help them in answer to their prayers as he was to help Samuel and his people.

The Intermediates and Seniors. — With these classes the teacher can wisely go into the vivid details of the struggle with the Philistines — the way the ark among the heathen showed the power of God, and the stirring story of the battle. It is a lesson in the victory through prayer that will come to each of the boys and girls all through their

lives, if they will arm themselves with this mighty weapon of the Christian warfare.

The Older Classes.—These events illustrate so many of the qualifications for leadership—humility before God, decisions, courage, persistence, system, faith in God and man—that Samuel may well be made an example before the class of successful leadership. And what is more needed than this in the modern world, in the church, the community, the nation, and the world?

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time.—Professor Beecher's date for the taking and return of the ark is B.C. 1142; for the events of this lesson, B.C. 1121.

Place.—The exact site of Eben-ezer is unknown. It was in Benjamin, to the north of Bethel.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Great occasions when the ark was a factor.
Victories in Bible times won by God's power.
The Bible doctrine of prayer.
Memorial stones in the Bible.
The value of thanksgiving in life.
The secret of Samuel's power.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

The fall of Dagon before the ark is described in *Paradise Lost*, I., 457 ff.

The hymn, "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah." John Newton's *Olney Hymns*, XXVI. and XXVII.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: Victory through Prayer.

I. GOD SHOWS HIS POWER TO THE PHILISTINES, 1 Sam. 5:1-7:1.

A savor of death.
The return of the ark.
A savor of life.

II. GOD PROMISES HIS POWER TO THE ISRAELITES, 1 Sam. 7:2-6.

The word of God's prophet.
The "if" of the promise.
Purification and repentance.

III. GOD'S POWER IN ANSWER TO PRAYER, 1 Sam. 7:7-17.

The great need.
The earnest prayer.
The glorious answer.
Thanksgiving and memory.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Expositions, by Alexander Maclaren. Henry Ward Beecher's great sermon, "Memorials of Divine Mercy" (*Sermons*, Vol. III.). Chapter on "The Golden Mice and Emrods" in *An Expositor's Note Book*, by Samuel Cox. "The Ark at Beth-shemesh," by Hugh Macmillan, in *Jesus in the Cornfield*. Hastings's *Great Texts of the Bible* on 1 Sam. 7:12. Matheson's *Moments on the Mount*, p. 201. F. B. Meyer's *Through the Bible Day by Day*. Spurgeon's *Morning by Morning*, p. 365.

I. GOD SHOWS HIS POWER TO THE PHILISTINES, 1 Sam. 5:1-7:1. This is a lesson in God's power and how it may be obtained. The disastrous defeat of the Israelites at Eben-ezer, resulting in the capture of the ark and the death of Eli, was an illustration in capital letters of human weakness without God. That was the warning; now for the encouragement.

THE ARK BEFORE DAGON. It was the custom of both the Hebrews and the Philistines to place war trophies in their sanctuaries; therefore after the capture of the ark the sacred chest was taken to Ashdod, the chief city of the Philistines, and placed there in the temple of their principal god Dagon, the same god in whose honor the lords of the Philistines were sacrificing in Gaza when Samson pulled down the house over their heads (Judg. 16:21 ff.). Dagon was originally the god of agriculture or of fishing. His statue had the head and hands of a man and the body of a fish. The ark was placed before Dagon to indicate the triumph of the Philistines' god over that of the Hebrews; but the next morning the reverse was proved, for Dagon was flat on his face on the temple floor. They set him up again, and the next morning he lay across the threshold, his head and hands broken off.

"Let Jesus enter, and the dearest idols you have known will yield before him. Dare to admit the Saviour into the secret place of your heart. He will drive out the evil things that have too long infested it."—*F. B. Meyer*.

THE ARK AND THE PLAGUE. To indicate still more the power of God, a plague of mice (or rats) was sent upon Ashdod (1 Sam. 6:4, 5), followed by a plague of boils, probably what we now call the bubonic plague, a terrible disease that is spread by the agency of rats. In despair at the large number of deaths, connecting them with

2. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

the presence of the ark, the Philistines of Ashdod transferred the sacred chest to another of their five cities, Gath, about sixteen miles to the east. Gath was the home of Goliath, and the refuge of David when pursued by Saul. The Crusaders built a fortress on the site of the city. Around the site of Gath the British fought the Turks in the Great War. At Gath also the plague broke out, so that the ark was moved to Ekron, the most northerly of the five cities. The plague came there also and killed many, so that the people demanded that the ark be returned to the land of the Hebrews.

THE ARK RESTORED TO THE HEBREWS. On the advice of their priests and diviners, the Philistines made golden mice and golden tumors, one for each of their cities, and placed them in a coffer for a trespass offering. Thus the Israelites made the brazen serpent in the wilderness (Num. 21:4-9). This coffer, with the ark, the Philistines placed on a new cart, to which they tied two milch kine that had never been used for ordinary purposes, the Philistines taking their calves home with them. "Now," said the priests and diviners, "we shall know that these plagues have come from Jehovah if the kine, instead of going home to their calves as they naturally would do, go over to the country of the Hebrews." This the kine did, going straight to Beth-shemesh ("House of the Sun"), the nearest Hebrew town to the east, lying on the edge of Judah about twelve miles southeast of Ekron. Here the kine stopped by a great stone on which the men of Beth-shemesh sacrificed them, splitting up the wood of the cart for a fire. All this the Philistine chiefs saw as they followed at a distance, and returned home made certain that their woes had come upon them through the power of the Hebrews' God.

"We need to have our eyes lifted up from material things and purged with the spiritual eye-salve of faith, that we may see the Ark of God standing in our harvest-field. Each autumn, with the pot of manna within it as the pledge of God's faithfulness to his great world-covenant, that seed-time and harvest shall never cease, it passes this way with unfailing regularity, more precious than the golden sheaves, more glorious than the autumn sunshine." — *Hugh Macmillan*.

THE ARK A SAVOR OF LIFE. But the ark was still "a savor of death" to the careless and ungodly; for when the men of Beth-shemesh handled the sacred chest heedlessly, looking into it with irreverent curiosity, the Lord smote seventy of them (all agree that the addition, "and fifty thousand," crept into the text through some editor's or copyist's blunder). In terror the Beth-shemites sent for the men of Kirjath-jearim, "the City of Thickets," nine miles west of Jerusalem and about nine miles northeast of Beth-shemesh, the nearest town on the way to Shiloh. Shiloh itself was probably in Philistine hands at this time, so that the ark was not taken back there. Kirjath-jearim itself was under Philistine influence, which will explain why the ark remained there until David's victories freed the land from the Philistine peril, and the shepherd king brought the ark in triumph to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6). During all that century the ark remained in the home of Abinadab in the hill, his son Eleazar being solemnly consecrated to take care of it; and here it was no longer "a savor of death" but "a savor of life."

II. GOD PROMISES HIS POWER TO THE ISRAELITES, 1 Sam. 7:2-6.
2. It was twenty years that the ark spent at Kirjath-jearim — not before it was



Dagon.

3. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

taken from there, for that was much longer, but before the reformation under Samuel which is about to be described. During all this time **all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah**. The pious among the Israelites could not forget that their central sanctuary was despoiled, the holy symbol of the presence of Jehovah was in a strange resting-place, and the insolent supremacy of the Philistines showed the displeasure of Jehovah. It was a time that called loudly for repentance and reform.

3. Samuel was the second Moses of his people. He saw clearly that what they needed was not an army, but Jehovah; and in order to get back Jehovah they must turn to him with all their hearts, and prove their repentance by putting away the heathen gods that they were worshipping with the abominable heathen rites.

The If of the promise is to be noted carefully. God's promises of help and of blessing are always conditioned on our willingness and ability to receive the fulfilment of them. Not all his ocean of love can enter a closed reservoir. The Saviour knocks at the door and will gladly enter — if — we open the door.

4. **Put away the Baalim** (the male deities, often local gods) **and the Ashtaroth** (the female deities). Putting them away involved the destruction of their images and the cessation of the shameful rites performed in their honor. **And served Jehovah only**. God is a jealous God and allows his followers to have no other gods before him (Ex. 20:3, 5). He does not accept any service that is divided with any one or anything else. "It must be 'Him only,' if it is Him at all. Real religion

is exclusive, as real love is. The hands that would clasp him, and be upheld by the clasp, must be emptied of trifles." — *Alexander Maclaren*.

5. This reform, so briefly related, must have taken some time to accomplish. When the hearts of the people had been thus turned to Jehovah, **Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh**. The probable site of Mizpeh ("the Watch-tower") is a lofty hill, 2935 feet high, about five miles northwest of Jerusalem. Its modern name, *Neby Samwill*, recalls its connection with Samuel. At Mizpeh the



Mizpeh.

Israelites assembled for their campaign against Benjamin (Judg. 20:1), for the election of Saul as king (1 Sam. 10:17), and again, in the time between the Old and New Testaments, when Judas Maccabæus called for national humiliation in preparation for their revolution against the despotic Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. 3:42-46). "It shows what a wonderful power Samuel exercised, how deeply his passionate appeals influenced the nation, that almost unarmed and undisciplined, with no military commander to inspire them with confidence and lead them to victory, they provoked a contest with a foe greatly superior in equipment and force, and animated by a long series of successes." — *Rev. William J. Deane*. **And I will**

6. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

pray for you unto Jehovah. Samuel, who was a child of prayer, became a man of prayer; see for instances of his prayers 1 Sam. 8:6; 12:17-19, 23; 15:11; compare Ps. 99:6; Jer. 15:1, where Samuel is named as mighty in prayer.

6. **They . . . drew water.** The Israelites learned in their desert wanderings how precious water is, and used it as a symbol of devotion in their sacrifices, as later, when water was plentiful with them, they used wine. **Poured it out before Jehovah,** in token that they poured out before him their spirits in repentance and in supplication for pardon. **And fasted on that day.** Fasting from food is always a symbol of sorrow and shame, as feasting signifies joy and thanksgiving. Here it meant the desire to "fast from sin." Compare the fast on the great day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29-31). **We have sinned against Jehovah.** The people made the same confession in the days of Jephthah (Judg. 10:10). It is never enough for repentance to be in the heart; it must also be spoken, for our sin, though primarily against God, is also against men. **And Samuel judged the children of Israel.** Samuel the prophet had turned the hearts of the people back to Jehovah; now Samuel the judge set in order their lives, which had become disorganized by their heathen wickedness. There would be many wrongs to right, many decencies to reestablish, many good old ways to repair. Civilization had become relaxed. Every revival of religion is accompanied by just such a civic and social housecleaning.

PURIFICATION AND REPENTANCE. "Confession is like blowing the trumpet of revolt: it does not make a stiff fight unnecessary, but gives the signal for, and itself begins, the conflict." — *Alexander Maclaren.*

Confession and repentance must be whole-hearted, not like that of the man who stole a hundred dollars. Long afterwards he sent this letter to the man he had robbed: "Dear Sir: Five years ago I robbed you of one hundred dollars. I am filled with remorse that I could have done such a thing. I send you a dollar and a half to ease my conscience."

Confession and repentance must be hopeful. "All true penitence must take account of God's willingness and readiness to forgive. The repentance which deals only with sin, and not with grace, is nothing more or better than despair, and will lead a man to go out and hang himself, as did Judas, rather than to go out and weep bitterly, as did Peter." — *Rev. George F. Pentecost, D.D.*

"What is repentance?" asked a Sunday-school superintendent; and a wise little girl answered, "It is being sorry enough to quit."

"You cannot repent too soon, because you do not know how soon it may be too late." — *Thomas Fuller.*

"If we put off repentance another day, we have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in." — *William Mason.*

"He who repents every day for the sins of every day, when he comes to die will have the sin of but one day to repent of." — *Henry.*

"Repentance is toward God and not toward punishment." — *Pentecost.*

"Repentance without amendment is like continual pumping in a ship without stopping the leaks." — *Palmer.*

"The opportunity and ability to repent is one of the highest privileges that God has granted to man." — *Peabody.*

"Repentance is the greatest deed that can be done on earth." — *Russell H. Conwell.*

III. GOD'S POWER IN ANSWER TO PRAYER, 1 Sam. 7:7-17. The national assembly at Mizpeh seems to have occupied much time; there was much to do, much to be undone. The Philistines had ample time to gather a formidable array against the Israelites. They would be quickly suspicious of such an assembly, regarding it as preliminary to an attempt to throw off their yoke.

7. **They were afraid.** Having lived apart from God so long, the Israelites had lost their faith and confidence in his protecting power. Fear is one of the surest

8. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it* for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

10. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Beth-car.

12. Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

and saddest effects of sin. In this case, however, the fear was salutary, for it threw the Israelites, in their weakness and trembling, back upon the power of God. We



Altar of Burnt Sacrifice.

also need a wholesome fear of our mighty enemy, Satan, "and no fault is more fatal than an underestimate of his power. If we go into battle singing, we shall probably come out of it weeping; if we begin bragging, we shall end bleeding." — *Alexander Maclaren*.

8. In all times of great need men testify to the truth of religion by relying on religious men. How quickly calamities point out God's heroes! Whatever Samuel's influence may have been before, he was supreme in Israel on this day of terror. **Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us.** Even those who have scouted prayer turn to it in times of distress, when their ship is going down, when the plague is raging, when the life of some loved one is slipping away, when they feel themselves to be near death. If they have forgotten how to pray, they beg

others to pray for them. This common experience is one of the best proofs of the eternal reality back of prayer.

9. **Samuel took a sucking lamb.** It was required to be not less than seven days old (Lev. 22:27), and it was entirely burned upon the altar to symbolize the entire consecration of the people to God.

10. **Jehovah thundered with a great thunder** (literally, "voice"). "A thunder-storm, with hailstones and masses of ice, burst in the face of the enemy." — *James Sime*. The loud thunder encouraged the Israelites but drove the Philistines into a panic. The Israelites perceived the confusion and rout of their enemies, and added to it by pursuing them as far as Beth-car, an unknown place "apparently on high ground overhanging the road back to Philistia." — *Cambridge Bible*.

Illustration. History tells us of a number of places of defeat changed afterwards to places of victory, such as the island of Meloria where the republic of Pisa inflicted a severe defeat on the republic of Genoa. But in 1284 the Genoese admiral, Oberto Doria, directed his warships purposely to the same spot, crushed the Pisan fleet, and took so many prisoners that it was said, "To see Pisa, you must now go to Genoa."

12. **Then Samuel took a stone.** In that rocky land a stone was the most natural as well as the most permanent memorial of a great event. This famous stone was set up between Mizpeh and Shen, which means "the Tooth," probably referring to some certain spire of rock. Samuel named the stone Eben-ezer, which means "The Stone of Help," as Samuel explained it, **Hitherto** (up to this time — not this place)

hath Jehovah helped us. The stone, which was a memorial of the past, was also an assurance for the future.

"He who hath led will lead
All through the wilderness;
He who hath fed will feed,
He who hath blessed will bless."

"Here I raise my Eben-ezer,
Hither by thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home."

— Robert Robinson.

"From the earliest times men have reared stones; for instance, the stones of Stonehenge, and the great and lovely cromlechs that you meet with, both in the far East and the far West." — *Hastings*. Watson tells of a stone far up among the hills, marked "Eben-ezer," which was set up a hundred years ago by a lonely sheep-farmer who had been trained for the ministry, but had abandoned the intention because of theological doubts. But one day, on that solitary hillside, he found God and peace, and set up that stone to commemorate the great event in his life.

13. So the Philistines were subdued. Evidently this refers only to the temporary results of this defeat, for the book of Samuel records many more instances of Philistine aggression (1 Sam. 9: 16; 10: 5; 13: 3, 5, 19; 14: 21; 17: 1; 23: 27). Indeed, it was the activity of the Philistines that caused the Israelites to desire a king. **All the days of Samuel**, therefore, probably means Samuel's active judgeship; when he became old and his sons governed corruptly the Philistines grew aggressive again. For the present, however, the Philistines were effectually humbled, so that the Israelites got back the towns which the Philistines had taken from them; and also the Amorites (the Canaanites, perhaps those dwelling in the highlands), next to the Philistines the strongest foes of the Hebrews, kept peace with Israel.

15. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. To be sure, he made his sons judges when he was old (1 Sam. 8: 1), and he made Saul king, but he evidently still possessed authority, and was looked to as the power behind the throne to the day of his death.

16. He went from year to year in circuit. The four places which Judge Samuel visited every year were all sanctuaries, places of worship, including Ramah, which Samuel made a holy place by building an altar there. Bethel, the modern *Beitin*, was ten miles north of Jerusalem. There Abraham built an altar, there Jacob had his stairway dream, there the ark rested for a time in the days of the judges, and there Jeroboam set up one of his calf-idols. Gilgal, near where the Israelites crossed the Jordan to enter Canaan, is the place of the first passover in the promised land, and the probable home of the ark during the conquest. It was at this time the national capital. Mizpeh was an important place northwest of Jerusalem (see v. 5). Ramah, Samuel's birthplace and home, was about twelve miles west of Shiloh, on the western edge of "the hill country of Ephraim." With this summary the historian closes the first section of the book, dealing with the judgeship of Samuel. The next chapter opens the second section, the career of Saul.

OUR EBEN-EZERS. Samuel and his people won their great victory on the field where they had suffered their great defeat. So we may transform our failure into triumphs. So we may "rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things." However often we have sinned, there is an Eben-ezer of forgiveness, purity, and peace for us, if we make the Lord our helper.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" — yes, even in our defeats, if the defeats lead us to the Conqueror. "God's 'hitherto' carries 'henceforward' wrapped up in it." — *Alexander Maclaren*. His long-suffering in the past assures us of his readiness to help in the future.

"Each sweet Eben-ezer I have in review
Confirms his good pleasure to help me quite through." — *John Newton*.

"The memory of all God's mercies ought to be perpetuated. Every critical period, as the turning of the year; every point of success in any enterprise of life; every point where we gain a higher joy, whether it be secular, or social, or spiritual; every new relation which promises great blessedness to us; every business achievement which seems to lift us out of difficulties; every great mischief that impended as a threatening sky, but that is rolled away — every such event or experience ought to have a distinct recognition." — *Henry Ward Beecher*.

"The newest of all revelations is the life of my past when seen in God; it is like the difference between passing through a landscape at night and looking down upon the same landscape from the brow of the hill at morning." — *George Matheson*.

Ebenezer has become a Christian name. It is a name given also sometimes to churches, as a sailors' chapel is called a Bethel.

Illustration. "We delight to look down a long avenue of trees. It is delightful to gaze from end to end of the long vista, a sort of verdant temple, with its branching pillars and its arches of leaves. Even so should we look down the long aisles of our years, at the green boughs of mercy overhead, and the strong pillars of loving-kindness and faithfulness which bear up our joys. Are there no birds in yonder branches singing? Surely there must be many, and they all sing of mercy received 'hitherto.'" — C. H. Spurgeon.

"In every gone-by trouble Thou hast heard,
Thou hast upheld, till now! Across the waste,
The dreary wilderness of trodden years,
Faith can full many an Eben-ezer see,
Pillars erected to commemorate
The answered prayer, the great deliverance known." — Ebenezer Palmer.

LESSON VIII. — May 23.

ISRAEL'S FIRST KING. — I Samuel 9:15-10:24.

PRINT 1 Sam. 9:15-21; 9:25-10:1.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Only fear Jehovah, and serve Him in truth with all your heart.*

— I SAM. 12:24.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 19.

Additional Material for Teachers : I Sam. 8:4-9:14; 10:25-27.

Primary Topic : SAUL VISITS SAMUEL.

Lesson Material : I Sam. 9:15-10:24.

Memory Verse : I will hear what God Jehovah will speak. Ps. 85:8.

Junior Topic : SAUL CHOSEN AS KING.

Lesson Material : I Sam. 9:1-10:9.

Memory Verse : Luke 16:10.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : KINGLY QUALITIES IN SAUL.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE SELECTION OF LEADERS.

Additional Material : Luke 6:12-16; Acts 9:13-19.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The Younger Classes. — The Primary and Junior grades will be interested in Saul's hunt for his father's asses, in the story of his talks with Samuel, and of the anointing. They will like to know also about the lot-drawing and about Saul's modest hiding. The lesson is full of teachings for the little ones, teachings of trustworthiness, of manliness, and of modesty.

The Intermediate Classes. — Intermediate and Senior pupils, while interested in this sprightly story, will also be profited by considering the qualities in Saul which made him a successful leader of men. Every active boy or girl wants to make a success of life, and this lesson gives many a hint.

The Older Classes. — The duty of choosing leaders and of setting them to work and supporting them is one that

comes often to the older students. In the young people's society, in the church, in the Sunday school, in the community, in elections, in business, in society, it is necessary to select leaders. This lesson tells us how to find the right person for a given task, and that is what the older pupils will get out of it chiefly.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Saul was made king (Beecher) B.C. 1102.

Place. — The assembly of elders which made the request for a king met at Samuel's home town, Ramah, about six miles north of Jerusalem. There Samuel anointed Saul. The assembly of the people to ratify the choice of Saul was at Mizpeh, near Ramah and about four miles northwest of Jerusalem.

THE ROUND TABLE.**FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.**

Bad sons of good fathers in the Bible.
 Bible teachings on answers to prayer.
 The meaning of anointing.
 Schools of the prophets.
 Hebrew national assemblies and their functions.
 Saul's character.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.**SUBJECT : The Choice of a Leader.****I. THE PEOPLE'S WILFUL PURPOSE,**
1 Sam. 8 : 1-22.

Samuel's base sons.
 The people's foolish desire.
 Why the desire was granted.

II. SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL AS KING,
1 Sam. 9 : 1-10 : 1.

The character of Saul.
 Saul's quest.
 What Saul found.

III. THE PEOPLE ACCEPT SAUL AS KING, 1 Sam. 10 : 2-27.

Saul among the prophets.
 Saul chosen by lot.
 Saul silent under scorn.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

J. R. Miller's *Devotional Hours with the Bible*. Hastings's *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible*, Vol. III. Albertson's *College Sermons*. Fleming's *Israel's Golden Age*. A fine sermon on Saul in Trench's *Shipwrecks of Faith*. Chapters on Samuel (by Simpson) and Saul (by Milligan) in *Men of the Old Testament*. Maclaren's *Expositions*. Whyte's *Bible Characters*. Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*. Burrell's *Wayfarers of the Bible*. Banks's *The Sunday Night Evangel*. Gordon's *Revelation and the Ideal*.

I. THE PEOPLE'S WILFUL PURPOSE, 1 Sam. 8 : 1-22. One of the strangest (and yet one of the most natural) things in the Bible is the way in which Samuel, though he had before him the sad experience of Eli with his bad sons, yet allowed his own sons to grow up in evil ways, becoming greedy, grafters, and unjust. They had godly names, Joel ("Jehovah is God") and Abijah ("Jehovah is my father"), but they did not live up to their names. They were judges of the southern district, holding court at Beersheba, while Samuel judged in the north, but they perverted judgment. And Samuel, like Eli before him, seemed to wink at his sons' base conduct.

THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL were the heads of families. The assembly of elders, in the old days of the nation, was the fundamental authority, the Congress of the Hebrews. The elders continued as an institution under the kings, and after the return from exile. In New Testament times they made up one of the divisions of the Sanhedrin. These elders met together, deliberated on the state of Israel, and presented their conclusions to Samuel. They desired him to select a king to rule them, and gave three reasons for their request : (1) that Samuel was growing old ; (2) that his sons were not fit to succeed him ; (3) that the nations around them had kings ; to these later (v. 20) they added another reason (4), that their ruler might be able to lead them in war, and not merely to be a priest or a judge.

SAMUEL TOOK THIS URGENT REQUEST BEFORE THE LORD, to whom all human perplexities should be taken. He was told that the people had not rejected him, they had rejected Jehovah ; they were merely doing what they had done over and over throughout their history, relying on their own judgment, or following the example of the heathen, instead of relying on the God who had won all their victories, and seeking first to know and do his will. Samuel was told to grant their request, but to tell them plainly what fate they were bringing on themselves, that they might be without excuse.

Illustration. "We should learn a lesson of patience and forbearance towards others from the way God bears with men's sins. Abraham, says an old story, welcomed a tired wayfarer to his tent and set bread before him. The old man began to eat without giving God thanks. Then the patriarch in anger thrust him away into the darkness. But God rebuked Abraham : 'Since I have borne with his unthankfulness all his life long, couldst thou not have borne with him one night ?'" — J. R. Miller.

THE WARNING that Samuel gave was couched in unmistakable terms. The king they desired to set over them would compel their sons to be his personal retainers, to drive his war chariots and ride his horses to war, to run before his equipage and announce his coming, to lead his soldiers, till his ground, and manufacture his swords and spears. Their daughters would be taken as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. The

15. Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

best of their fields, vineyards, and orchards would be seized, together with tithes of their harvests and cattle. In short, they would be the king's slaves, and would cry to God for freedom, but cry in vain. Yet in spite of this solemn warning the infatuated people persisted in their request. "It is the story of the nations from the beginning until now. The Way of the Wilful is the highway of the children of men." — *Rev. David James Burrell, D.D.*

WISE AND UNWISE PRAYERS. "The true way to pray is to lay our requests at the feet of God and leave them there without undue urgency. We do not know what is best for us. A pastor sat by the sick-bed of a child who seemed to be near death. Turning to the parents he said, 'We will pray to God for your child. What shall we ask him to do?' After a few moments of silence the father said, amid his sobs: 'We would not dare choose — leave it to him.' This is the only safe way to pray in such matters." — *J. R. Miller.*

"I have been amazed and even stupefied sometimes to consider how my own little, petty, foolish, whimsical desires have been faithfully and literally granted me. We ought to be more afraid of our desires, not because we shall not get them, but because we shall almost certainly have them fulfilled. What a man sows he shall reap! That is taken generally to mean that if he sows pleasure, he shall reap disaster; but it has a much truer and more terrible meaning than that — namely, that if a man sows the seed of small, trivial, foolish joys, the grain that he reaps is small, trivial, and foolish too. God is indeed in many ways an indulgent Father, like the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son; and the best rebuke that he gives, if we have the wisdom to see it, is that he so often does hand us, with a smile, the very thing we have desired." — *A. C. Benson.*

"The surest way to disgust men with their own folly is to let it work out its results, just as boys in candy shops are allowed to eat as much as they like at first, and so get a distaste for the dainties." — *Alexander McLaren.*

II. SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL AS KING, 1 Sam. 9:1-10:1. THE FATHER OF SAUL was a man of wealth and influence, Kish by name, who lived in Benjamin, the small division of the Holy Land north of Judah. His town was Gibeah (Geba), the modern Tell-el-Fûl, about four miles north of Jerusalem.

SAUL'S NAME means the same as Samuel's, "asked (from God)."

SAUL'S PERSON was tall and stately, "every inch a king." He was taller by a head than any other man in the nation, a giant indeed; and in those days before gunpowder had equalized height, inches counted in a warrior. Moreover, he was in the prime of life, just of the right age for aggressive leadership. But the catalogue of qualities stops here, very significantly; Saul could not have been said to be a man of God, nor is it said that he came of godly parents.

IT IS TO SAUL'S CREDIT that he was sent by his father on an important errand. The asses belonging to Saul's father, Kish, that had gone astray, were no small part of his wealth, being used both in travelling and in cultivating the ground. Saul was sent for them, which shows that he was a trustworthy and active young man. He went westward from Gibeah, then southward, then northeastward till he came to Ramah, the home of Samuel. Then Saul, mindful of his father's anxiety, which by this time might well be greater for him than for the asses, since he had been gone about three days, proposed a return. It was not Saul, but his servant, who suggested getting advice from Samuel. Saul, who on a famous occasion was ready enough to consult the witch of Endor, did not think of consulting the man of God. As it was, he thought only of what fee he could give the seer. This point was settled by the servant's producing a piece of silver weighing a quarter of a shekel, worth about sixteen cents, and equal in purchasing value to perhaps ten times that sum to-day. They fortunately found that Samuel had just returned from an official circuit, and was about to bless a sacrifice upon the altar which he had built.

15. *Jehovah had revealed unto Samuel.* "Literally, 'had uncovered Samuel's ears,' a figure of speech said to be derived from the practice of removing the hair or a corner of the turban from another's ear in order to whisper a secret into it." — *Cambridge Bible.*

16. To-morrow, about this time, I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him *to be* captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17. And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

18. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to-day; and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart.

20. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

21. And Saul answered and said, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

16. **I have looked upon my people.** So long as the people were determined upon a king, and would not trust to God's direct leadership, God would still do the best he could for them through their king, and would send them a leader who could defeat their enemies; for the Philistines, it seems, were again oppressing the Israelites.

17. **Behold, the man.** As soon as Samuel saw the tall, kingly young man approach, he wondered if this could not be the God-appointed leader; and God spoke to his heart and told him definitely that it was. It is God who gives every true leader access to the hearts of men. "Many a born king spends his whole life in the pursuit of asses for want of some kind prophet to tell him he is a head and shoulders taller than other people." — *M. E. Coleridge*.

19. **All that is in thy heart.** "In the light of Saul's character as revealed in the sequel, we can hardly go wrong in understanding these words as an indication that Saul had brooded in secret over the tyranny of the Philistines, and was perhaps already forming plans for ending it." — *New Century Bible*. Thus Gideon, threshing his grain in secret, mourned over the havoc wrought by the Midianites. Thus Joan of Arc, tending her sheep, brooded over the wrongs of her country.

20. **For whom is all that is desirable in Israel?** "Do not worry about your father's asses," said Samuel, "for they are found"; and he implied that even if they were not found, a coming king, with the wealth of the nation at his disposal, need not fret himself over so small a matter.

21. **Am I not a Benjamite?** The tribe of Benjamin was originally the smallest of the tribes except Manasseh (Num. 1:34, 37), and it was almost annihilated by the terrible slaughter described in Judg. 20:46. Moreover, as Saul modestly added, his own family was the most insignificant of this insignificant tribe. "That is the language of a man whose heart is really touched for the time with divine grace. That is real humility; and humility is the root of all the graces, both natural and supernatural." — *Alexander Whyte*. Truly great men never think of themselves more highly than they ought to think (Rom. 12:3).

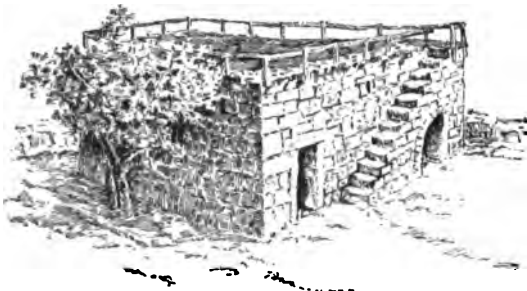
22. **Brought them into the guest-chamber.** This was the room in the sanctuary at Ramah where the sacrificial meal was eaten by the more distinguished citizens, the rest eating in the open air outside. Saul and his servant were honored by being placed at the head of these thirty persons, and Saul was further honored by receiving the thigh, which had been reserved according to custom for Samuel himself. Thus Samuel hinted that Saul was to take his place. Later, after the meal, Samuel continued to show respect to Saul, taking him to his own home down below the sanctuary in the town, and conversing with him upon the housetop. The flat roof of an Oriental house is still "resorted to for business, relaxation, or for sleeping. During a large part of the year it is the most agreeable place about the establishment, especially in the morning and evening." — *Thomson*. Here Saul and his servant slept, Samuel sleeping inside the house, and at daybreak (*dayspring*) the next morning Samuel

25. And when they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

26. And they arose early: and it came to pass, about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

27. And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God.

10:1. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it* not because the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance?



Oriental House with Stairs Leading to the Roof.

accompanied Saul through the town, still talking, doubtless, of what the two had conversed about on the housetop, namely, the distracted state of the country, and the need of strong, wise leadership.

Then Samuel, convinced by Saul's answers that he was the right man, did what he had been preparing Saul for. Sending the servant ahead out of sight and hearing, he bade the young man receive the divine command. Using perhaps the sacrificial oil

which was used to anoint priests, Samuel poured it upon Saul's head in token of consecration to God's service and the gift of God's Spirit. Then he kissed Saul in token of homage to the new-made king, and declared solemnly that Jehovah had thus anointed Saul to rule the divine inheritance, the people of Israel.

These ceremonies are still performed whenever a British sovereign is crowned. The Archbishop of Canterbury anoints the King, then kisses him, and the kiss of allegiance is given also by the bishops and by the premier peer of each order, representing all the peers.

Illustration. "Daniel Webster describes with deep emotion the noble manner in which his father told him, then a boy of fifteen, that he was about to send him to college. Webster says he could never forget the spot in the road where his father surprised and overwhelmed him with the good news, and when the vision of an educated manhood with all its privileges and responsibilities took possession of him, he burst into tears; his nature began to put forth new power." — Rev. George A. Gordon, D.D.



Samuel Anointing Saul.

Julius von Schnorr.

GOD'S LEADING IN OUR LIVES. Some that are ready to be led by God do not know how to discover what God's leading is. Henry Drummond once wrote some wise rules on the fly-leaf of his Bible: "To find out God's will — 1. Pray. 2. Think. 3. Talk to wise people, but do not regard their decisions as final. 4. Beware of the bias of your own will, but do not be too much afraid of it. God never unreasonably thwarts a man's nature and liking, and it is a mistake to think that his will is in the line of the disagreeable. 5. Meantime, do the next thing, for doing God's will in small things is the best preparation for knowing it in great things. 6. When decision and action are necessary, go ahead. 7. Never reconsider a decision when it is finally acted upon. 8. You will probably not find out until afterwards, perhaps long afterwards, that you have been led at all."



Ancient Anointing Horn.

"We must fare forth, unsped,
From homely board and bed;
We must set sail for port unknown,
On an uncharted course, alone.

"Push off. We have to go,
Whether we choose or no.
The Call, though faint and far away,
Has reached us, and we must obey.

"What will the voyage cost?
We are already lost
Who turn from land and love, to face
This blank immensity of space.

"Push out. We have to go,
Whether we fear or no;
And why stand shivering and appalled?
We go because the Voice has called.

"What matters where we go?
We do not ask to know.
He called us, and we came. The quest
For us is ended, and we rest." — *Ada Cambridge.*

III. THE PEOPLE ACCEPT SAUL AS KING, 1 Sam. 10:2-27. **SAMUEL'S PROOFS.** Samuel did not ask Saul to believe in the reality of his kingship without proofs. Saul's faith was weak; and no wonder, considering the greatness of the change that had come to him. The Lord is always ready to help our unbelief by evidence, if only our hearts are turned toward belief. The proofs that Samuel gave Saul were sufficient. He was to meet two men by the grave of Rachel, which was near Bethel on his way home. These men would tell him that his father's asses had been found. Then, going on to the oak of Tabor (some think that this was the oak under which Rebekah's nurse Deborah was buried), he would meet three men going to the Bethel sanctuary, carrying three kids, three loaves of bread, and a bottle of wine for their sacrifice. They would give him two loaves of bread, the first of his royal offerings. Next, as Saul came to "the hill (the *Gibeah*) of God," his own home of Gibeah or Geba, he was to meet a band of the prophets whom Samuel had trained and organized. Musicians would precede them, playing on stringed instruments (psaltery and harp), a tambourine or drum (timbrel), and a kind of flute (pipe). As Saul encountered them the Spirit of Jehovah would come upon him, and he would join their ecstatic songs, and be turned into another man. From that time he was to trust to the Spirit of Jehovah for guidance on all occasions.

All these things came to pass, and must have made Saul clear in regard to his destiny. Especially striking was the coming upon him of prophetic inspiration, a happening so foreign to his past course as to give rise to the amazed proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

But, though sure of his splendid future, Saul did not boast of it, as Joseph did, however innocently. When his uncle Ner (1 Sam. 14:50) questioned him about his intercourse with Samuel, he kept the anointing a secret, partly because Samuel had done it secretly and so implied that it was not yet to be announced, and partly because of his innate modesty and prudence, which he showed also on other occasions.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, summoned to meet at Mizpeh, was for the public ratification of what Samuel had done privately. It was the logical sequel of the request made by the people at Ramah (1 Sam. 8:4-22). Any Israelite twenty years old could attend this assembly (Num. 1:3).

After repeating the warning he had given before, that by the choice of a king the people were rejecting Jehovah as their ruler, Jehovah to whom they owed all that the nation had become, Samuel cast lots among the tribes, and the lot fell upon the tribe of Benjamin; then among the clans or families of Benjamin, and that of the Matriotes was indicated; then among the heads of houses, and Kish was pointed out; then among the members of the household of Kish, and the lot fell upon Saul. This was, to Saul and Samuel alike, still further confirmation of the choice of the young man.

THE MODESTY AND SELF-RESTRAINT OF THE YOUNG KING were made immediately evident, for when they sought for him he could not be found at first, but finally was discovered hiding among the baggage of those that had come to the meeting from a distance.

Illustration. Thus George Washington, when John Adams in Congress first mentioned the Virginian as the most suitable commander-in-chief of the American army, darted out of the room, and did not return while the matter was in debate. When informed of his unanimous election, he declared very earnestly that he did not think himself equal to the command.

The splendid young man was brought out, a head taller than the tallest in the crowd, and at once the shout arose, "Long live the king!" The greater part of the assembly accompanied Saul in a loyal, rejoicing procession to his home; but, as might have been expected, certain worthless fellows asked sneeringly, "How can this man, of whom no one has ever heard before, save the nation from the Philistines?" And they did not join in the gifts which the others brought as tokens of allegiance.

But Saul showed his strength of character by holding his peace; literally, "he was as one deaf."

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
And he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. — Prov. 16: 32.

THE QUALITIES OF A TRUE LEADER. 1. *The true leader will win by his forbearance.* He will make allowances. He will not mistake hasty words for sincere convictions, or a spurt of anger for determined opposition.

Illustration. William Morris, the famous poet, was once making a speech when an anarchist got up and hotly accused him of talking nonsense. Morris quietly went on with his speech as if there had been no interruption, and at the close, when those in the room expected him to turn on the fellow and rend him, he took his arm and invited him to supper and a chat. That man became one of Morris's greatest admirers.

2. *God will attract followers to the men whom he has commissioned as leaders.* Saul was followed home by a host "whose hearts God had touched" (1 Sam. 10: 26). "Some such band of God-touched hearts is at the genesis of every important moral and religious reform of the ages." — *Rev. C. C. Albertson, D.D.* Dr. Albertson instances the followers that gathered around John Wesley, George Williams, Samuel Mills, and the Japanese lad who founded the Kumamoto Band.

3. *The true leader is capable of great enthusiasm.* Saul illustrated this when he joined the band of singing prophets. That was his conversion, the first conversion described in the Bible. "As he joined the enthusiasts and threw himself heart and soul into their prophesying, Saul felt that he was entering on new paths, and that personal ambitions were being absorbed by the holier aim to which he now consecrated himself — the service of Jehovah in the deliverance of his country." — *Prof. J. D. Fleming.* "Religious feeling had hitherto only slumbered in his bosom. From this time it became the ruling power, though his after life showed that, however intense, it was superficial, and left his deeper nature essentially unchanged." — *Cunningham Geikie.* "Had Saul's change of heart only held, had his conversion only become complete, Saul would have been one of the greatest of all the Old Testament men." — *Alexander Whyte.* "It is a comfort to turn from this superficial transformation of the lower man into the higher to the oft-recurring miracle of Christianity which is illustrated in Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles. Paul describes that miracle, which happens to-day in every land, when he says, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.'" — *Rev. Louis Albert Banks, D.D.*

4. *The true leader is modest and self-controlled.* "There is nothing which so often oversets the whole balance of a mind, which brings out at once faults unsuspected

before, as a sudden and abrupt elevation from a very low to a very high position. Now, there has been seldom a more abrupt elevation than was Saul's; but he gives no token, at all events at the outset of his career, that it has wrought this mischief in him." — *Archbishop Trench.*

5. *The true leader will be ready, at God's bidding, to yield his place to another*, as Samuel yielded his position to Saul. "The magnanimity of the man thus giving his mind and his hand, not to the perpetuating of his own life-work, but to the setting up of ways in which that would be entirely eclipsed by others of the coming era — all this is noble beyond praise. Samuel had, indeed, relit a lamp in Israel; but this unselfish, great-minded, and true-hearted old man gave his last days to the lighting of a new lamp whose glory should pale his own." — *Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson.*

6. *Above all, the true leader will lead men in the power of God.* This is what Saul's change of heart meant to him. "He who, when Samuel's revelations were first granted to him, was conscious only of his weakness and insufficiency, now learned that he who had called him would also enable him to fulfil his new office." — *Rev. George Milligan, D.D.* "Let us most eagerly seek the sacred anointing of the Holy Spirit at the spring of the day. His sacred unction will teach us all things that we need to know." — *Rev. F. B. Meyer, D.D.*

LESSON IX. — May 30.

JONATHAN AND HIS ARMORBEARER. — I Samuel 14: 1-46.

PRINT 1 Sam. 14: 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Be strong and of good courage.* — JOSH. 1: 6.

Devotional Reading : Eph. 6 : 10-20.

Additional Material for Teachers : I Sam. 13 : 1-23.

Primary Topic : A STORY OF A BRAVE PRINCE.

Lesson Material : I Sam. 14 : 1-23.

Memory Verse : Fear not ; for I am with thee. Isa. 43 : 5.

Junior Topic : HOW TWO MEN PUT AN ARMY TO FLIGHT.

Lesson Material : I Sam. 14 : 1-13.

Memory Verse : Ps. 27 : 3.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : OUR FOES AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE VALUE OF INITIATIVE IN CHRISTIAN WORK.

Additional Material : I Chron. 17 ; Rom. 15 : 20 ; Heb. 11 : 23-29.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

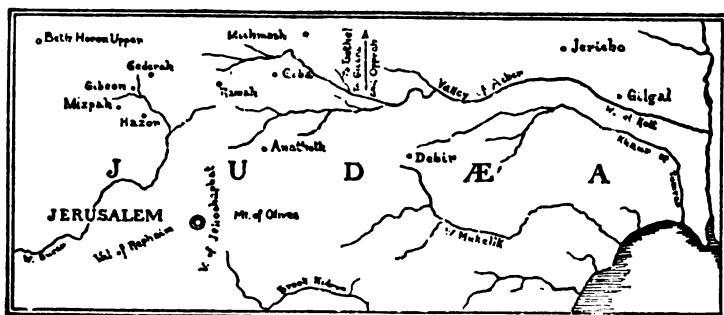
The Younger Pupils will be interested in the story of Jonathan's brave dash up the cliff and the way the Philistines melted away before him. Make much also of the faithful armorbearer. Teach the children that if they will only live so that God is with them, they need not fear any danger or difficulty.

The Intermediate Classes will take a broader view of the history, will study the onset of the Ammonites, the formal acceptance of Saul by the people, the attack of the Philistines, and Saul's rash command and its consequences, as well as Jonathan's bravery, with its application to their own lives.

The Older Classes, familiar with the story, will review it rapidly, and then make it the basis for a study of initiative in Christian work, such bold initiative as Jonathan displayed. Discuss where this initiative is needed, from whom it may be expected, what it will accomplish, and especially consider whether in your own church you are developing Christian initiative, and how it may be done.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Professor Beecher places the victory over the Ammonites at 1102 B.C., and Jonathan's exploit described in this lesson at 1085 B.C.



Place. — Gilgal, where Saul was finally accepted as king, and where Saul gathered the people to meet the Philistines, was southeast of Jericho. Geba (Gibeah) was six miles north of Jerusalem, Michmash not far away to the northeast, and Bethel about six miles to the north, or twelve miles north of Jerusalem.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Ammonites, situation and character.
The Philistines, the people and country.
Honey in Palestine.
The use of the lot in obtaining divine direction.
Superstition *versus* true worship.
Bible victories of a few against many.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : How to Win Victories for God and Right.

I. SAUL ESTABLISHED IN THE KINGDOM, I Sam. 11: 1-13: 23.

Victory over the Ammonites.
Samuel's valedictory.
The threat of the Philistines.
Saul's disobedience, and ours.

II. JONATHAN'S BOLD EXPLOIT, I Sam. 14: 1-15.

"No restraint to Jehovah."
The faithful armorbearer.
Two against an army.
"One with God is a majority."

III. JONATHAN'S PERIL AND PRESERVATION, I Sam. 14: 16-46.

Saul's foolish command.
Jonathan discovered.
Jonathan saved.
Jonathan's zeal for our present-day tasks.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Hastings's *Greater Men and Women of the Bible* on Samuel and Jonathan. Sermons on these events by Newbolt (in *Words of Exhortation*), Talmage (*The Mask Torn Off*), Nicoll (*Sunday Evening*), Maclaren (*Expositions*). "Jonathan," by Rev. J. G. Greenhough, in *Men of the Old Testament*. On honey in Palestine, Tristram's *Natural History of the Bible*. On the Urim and Thummim, see articles in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (by Nathan Isaacs) and *Hastings's Bible Dictionary* (by A. R. S. Kennedy).

I. SAUL ESTABLISHED IN THE KINGDOM, I Sam. 11: 1-13: 23. The new king soon found an opportunity to prove his qualities as a leader. The Ammonites were a fierce tribe east of the Jordan. Jephthah had defeated them, but under King Nahash they were attacking the Israelites east of the Jordan, and making the barbarous threat that they would blind them in their right eyes. Thus they could not fight, as the left eye in battle was covered by the shield.

When the messengers of these threatened Israelites arrived, Saul was at work on his farm, as Cincinnatus was following the plough when the messengers from the Roman senate came offering him the dictatorship. In a burst of rage Saul hewed in pieces the oxen with which he had been ploughing, and sent the pieces around among the people, bidding them come to the war or their oxen would be treated in the same fashion. So they gathered, 330,000 strong, and routed the Ammonites.

A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT GILGAL followed this notable victory, for it seemed proper to ratify unmistakably the choice of Saul made privately at Ramah, and then made at Mizpah with the opposition of part of the people. The execution of those who had opposed Saul at Mizpah was now proposed by his supporters, but he rightly refused to mar his triumph by any revenge.

THE FAREWELL ADDRESS OF SAMUEL was the chief feature of this assembly at Gilgal. It marked the end of the era of the judges. From that time Samuel was prophet and priest, but he was judge no longer. He challenged the people to point to any unrighteous act of his, and they shouted their testimony to his uprightness. Then Samuel reminded the people of God's kindness to them through all the history of the nation, how over and over he had sent deliverers to free them from their foes; and in witness to the power of Jehovah he called upon the heavens to send thunder and rain. This would be a miracle, because it was then wheat harvest, late May or early June, a time of the year when rain never falls and there are no storm-clouds in the sky. Then the Lord sent rain and thunder, and the people were greatly terrified, so that Samuel had to reassure them. He promised them that the Lord would not forsake them, if they would serve him faithfully, and that he himself would continue to teach them and pray for them.

It was a noble close to the judgeship of Samuel, second only to Moses as a leader of Israel. "True statesmanship," says Dr. Gunsaulus, "consists in discovering the way God is going, and getting things out of the way for him." Samuel was certainly a true statesman.

"The Man who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity, —
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not —
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpassed:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
Forever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name —
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is he
That every Man in arms should wish to be."

— From Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior."

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE PHILISTINES came upon the Israelites soon after the campaign against the Ammonites, when Saul had reigned two years. Of the army that had won the victory over the Ammonites Saul retained three thousand men, whom he stationed in three strongholds, — his own town of Geba (Gibeah), Michmash a little to the northeast, and Bethel a little further to the north.

Jonathan, Saul's brave and noble son, who was commanding at Geba, attacked the Philistine garrison of the place, doubtless on Saul's orders. Saul knew that the news would speedily pass through the Philistine nation, and it would be hot for revenge; therefore he sent runners to summon all Israel to meet the expected attack. The rendezvous, as usual, was Gilgal, as it was far from the Philistines and was not in danger from them. Against the Israelites the Philistines assembled in vast numbers, with thirty thousand chariots (the text should probably read one thousand), six thousand cavalry, and a countless host of infantry. When the Israelites saw how vast an army was opposed to them, their hearts failed, and many of them took to the caves and the dense woods, and some even ran away across the Jordan. Their plight was the worse because the Philistines had not allowed the Israelites to possess swords or spears, or even to have smiths in their land that could make weapons for them. Saul and Jonathan alone had sword and spear.

SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE, AND OURS. It was for this time that Samuel, by divine direction, had given Saul the orders recorded in 1 Sam. 10: 8. He was to tarry at Gilgal until Samuel arrived to offer sacrifices. He was not to begin a war till he had the blessing of Jehovah upon it. The reign which began in the self-will of the people could not expect to continue and prosper unless it submitted itself definitely to the will of God. This truth is the key to what follows.

Saul saw his soldiers falling away from him. The minutes were precious. Now, he thought, was the time to strike, if ever. In hot impatience he waited the seven days which Samuel had set, but he thought he could not wait an instant longer. He offered the sacrifices himself.

1. Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father.

2. And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron: and the people that *were* with him *were* about six hundred men;

3. And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, I-chabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

4. And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

5. The forefront of the one *was* situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.

Just as he had completed the ceremony, Samuel appeared, and sternly rebuked Saul. He owed everything to God, but he had put no trust in God or in God's priest and prophet. Therefore Samuel foretold that Saul's house should not continue, but the sceptre should pass to another, to a man after God's own heart.

Very much like Saul, we are tempted to hurry to our tasks without taking time for religion! "How difficult it is to realize, in the rush of life, as Philistine after Philistine tops the crest, that we must wait. 'No, I must not cut short my prayers. No, I must not scamp my daily meditation.' What a temptation there is to think that unless we are in a perpetual fuss and bustle Israel will melt away, and the Philistines will strike home. Let us not do unconsecrated work." — *Canon Neubolt*.

"The word of Jesus, in the mind of one who does not do the will of Jesus, lies like seed-corn in a mummy's hand." — *Henry van Dyke*.

"Not as I will": the sound grows sweet
Each time my lips the words repeat.
Not as I will: the darkness feels
More safe than light when this thought steals
Like whispered voice to calm and bless
All unrest and all loneliness.
Not as I will, because the One
Who loved us first and best has gone
Before us on the road, and still
For us must all his love fulfil,
Not as I will."

II. JONATHAN'S BOLD EXPLOIT, I Sam. 14: 1-15. If Saul had failed Jehovah, not so his glorious son Jonathan. By a deed of supreme trust in God Jonathan was to prove to Saul and the Israelites where their true resource lay. Jonathan was a genuine hero of faith, worthy to be ranked with any in the eleventh of Hebrews.

1. Jonathan . . . said unto the young man that bare his armor, corresponding to the squire of a knight of the Middle Ages. He proposed that they two, all alone, should attack the immense host of the Philistines. But he told not his father, since Saul, lacking his son's faith, would have forbidden an act that would have seemed to be foolhardy in the extreme.

2. And Saul abode. We have in verses 2-5 a parenthetical note regarding the situation. The especial point is that Saul had with him the great-grandson of Eli, Ahijah, who was officiating as high priest. Also we are told that Jonathan's way over to the Philistines lay through a deep ravine flanked by two craggy hills. One of these hills was called Seneh or "the Acacia," a name now given to the entire valley because of the acacia trees growing there; the other hill, on the north, was called Bozez or "Shining." "The great valley runs nearly due east, and thus the southern cliff is almost entirely in shade during the day. The contrast is surprising and picturesque between the dark cool color of the south side and the ruddy or tawny tints of the northern cliff, crowned with the gleaming white of the upper chalky

6. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for *there is* no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.

7. And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, *I am* with thee according to thy heart.

8. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.

9. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.

10. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this *shall be* a sign unto us.

strata. The picture is unchanged since the days when Jonathan looked over to the white camping-ground of the Philistines, and Bozez must then have shone as brightly as it does now, in the full light of an Eastern sun." — Conder's "Tent Work."

6 **These uncircumcised.** This term applied to the Philistines is Jonathan's reminder that they have not been sealed to God by the symbolic rite that marked the Israelites as God's children, and so could not expect God's help. **Jehovah will work for us,** Jonathan was confident. **There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few.** Perhaps in these noble words Jonathan had in mind the experience of Gideon and his three hundred. The thought was echoed by David before Goliath (1 Sam. 17 : 46, 47), by Asa before Zerah (2 Chron. 14 : 11), and in nearly the same words by the great Jewish patriot, Judas Maccabeus, before the battle of Beth-horon (1 Macc. 3 : 16-21): "With the God of heaven it is all one to deliver with a great multitude or with a small company; for the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of an host; but strength cometh from heaven." It was such men as Jonathan who "through faith waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. 11 : 34).



Valley of Michmash.

7. The armorbearer's fine answer is still more impressive in the Greek translation, the Septuagint: "Do all to which thine heart inclines; behold, I am with thee; as thy heart so is my heart." Thus also Jehu spoke to Jehonadab the son of Rechab (2 Kings 10 : 15).

10. **This shall be the sign.** Compare the sign of the milch kine, 1 Sam. 6 : 7-9. Compare also the sign which pointed out Isaac's future wife, Gen. 24 : 14, and the sign of Gideon's fleece, Judg. 6 : 36-40. Jonathan might seem to be resting too much on the mere chance of what words should first be spoken to them by the Philistines, but the Hebrews believed that God directed all the smallest details of life, and saw divine meanings in them. We do not believe that God discloses his will to us by trivial signs or omens, but that he speaks to us by our consciences, by his Word, and by men who are moved by his Spirit.

11. And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.

12. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.

13. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.

11. **Come forth out of the holes.** The limestone rock of the region is full of caves, where Saul's terrified soldiers had been hiding (1 Sam. 13:6).

12. **We will show you a thing.** Perhaps this means, "We will teach you a lesson," as Gideon took thorns and briers and with them "taught" the men of Succoth (Judg. 8:16).

13. **And Jonathan climbed up.** Conder in his *Tent Work in Palestine* describes a hill which may have been the one occupied by the Philistine guard whom Jonathan attacked:



From an old print.

Jonathan and His Armorbearer.

"Immediately to the east of the village of Michmash exists a natural fortress, still called 'the fort' by the peasantry. It is a ridge rising in three rounded knolls above a perpendicular crag, ending in a narrow tongue to the east with cliffs below." **They fell before Jonathan.** In those days of hand-to-hand fighting one strong and determined man could kill as many of his weaker antagonists as he could get within his reach, much as a boy can kill flies.

14. **Twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre.** No satisfactory explanation of this sentence has ever been made, but it evidently signifies that the first slaughter was in a comparatively small space; then the killing became widespread.

15. **There was a trembling in the camp,** the main camp of the Philistines, to which was rapidly communicated the terror which Jonathan had inspired in the outpost. This panic included the spoilers, the foraging parties mentioned in 1 Sam. 13:17, who would be among the boldest. The panic was increased by an earthquake, as that at Eben-ezer was caused by the

thunder-storm (1 Sam. 7:10), and that of the Syrians before Samaria by a mysterious noise of chariots and horses (2 Kings 7:6). The emotional and undisciplined armies of the East were particularly affected by these panics.

"ONE, WITH GOD, IS A MAJORITY." "At the first sight we get of Jonathan, he is fighting against the enemies of the Lord, and he dies engaged in the same warfare. Jonathan lived much with God; all the springs of his endeavors were in God. He prayed much. Men cannot live such lives as his without divine help of this kind." — *Rev. J. G. Greenhough.*

"Jonathan entered into the spirit of the divine covenant. Was not the old promise true, that 'one should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight' (Deut. 32:30)? Happy are they who can rise above depression and misfortune into the

clear heaven of fellowship with God, allying their weakness with his might, their ignorance with his wisdom !” — *F. B. Meyer*.

On a factory street in a Western city a sign was posted on an empty building : “To let, with or without power.” You may have your life on the same terms.

“It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything.” “Oh, do not pray for easy lives ! Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.” — *Phillips Brooks*.

Illustration. “In my college days the professor of natural history used to exhibit his great horseshoe magnet, wound about with coils of wire. He hung it up, charged the wire with a galvanic current, and it caught up and held four thousand pounds. He signaled to his assistant to draw off the current, and the power was gone. My brother, encircle your soul with faith and let the divine electricity of the love of Jesus Christ charge it. Then you can lift anything ; you can do anything that God wants you to do.” — *Theodore L. Cuyler*.

“Our Father, our Father, who dwellest in light,
We lean on thy love, and we rest on thy might;
In weakness and weariness joy shall abound,
For strength everlasting in thee shall be found,
Our Refuge, our Helper, in conflict and woe,
Our mighty Defender, how blessed to know,
For thine is the power.” — *Frances Kidley Havergal*.

III. JONATHAN'S PERIL AND PRESERVATION, 1 Sam. 14:16-46. A hasty muster, perhaps a roll-call, showed Saul that Jonathan and his armorbearer were absent, and Saul probably knew the courage and enterprise of his son well enough to be sure that he was in some way at the bottom of the disturbance he witnessed among the foe. Should he follow up the matter with a general attack ? Calling for the ephod mentioned in 1 Sam. 14:3 (for the ark was still at Kirjath-jearim, and it seems likely that the Septuagint reading of “the ephod” here represents the original), he bade Ahijah draw from it an omen telling him whether or not to advance. But before the priest had withdrawn his hand from the bag it was clear to Saul that the Philistines were routed, and he ordered an immediate pursuit, in which the entire Israelite army was reinforced by the Hebrews whom the Philistines had impressed to fight on their side, but who now turned against their former masters. So the Philistines fled headlong westward, and the Israelites rushed after them for fifteen or twenty miles, until the foe were safe on their own plains of Philistia at Aijalon.

SAUL'S RASH COMMAND. The precipitate flight of the Philistines without a cause showed that Jehovah was working for the Israelites. Saul wished to do something to show his religious zeal and retain Jehovah's presence, so he rashly proclaimed a fast for the entire day. No one was to stay in the pursuit of the Philistines to eat a mouthful. Saul's religion was half superstition, and all superstition is foolish. Fasting has a religious value, but not when strength of body is urgently needed, as it was on that day.

JONATHAN'S INNOCENT ERROR. In their pursuit through the forest, the Israelites came to a place “flowing with honey,” as Palestine is in so many parts. “Few countries are more admirably adapted for bees than this, with its dry climate, and its stunted but varied flora, consisting in large proportion of aromatic thymes, mints, and other labiate plants, as well as of crocuses in spring ; while the dry recesses of the limestone rocks everywhere afford shelter and protection for the combs.” — *Tristram*. In this case the honey was found (Hastings) “in hollow trees, from which it dropped to the ground.”

A striking proof of the folly of Saul's rash injunction is that his own son Jonathan did not, in the confusion, get word of it. He was weary from his great exertions, and, as was natural, with the point of his staff (Ellicott) took up a piece of the honeycomb, and on eating it felt his weariness pass away. When a bystander told him of Saul's oath, Jonathan promptly repudiated it as unwise : “My father hath brought disaster upon the land.” “This disaster was the incompleteness of the victory, owing to the people's being too exhausted to continue the pursuit.” — *Pulpit Commentary*. “Godly men will sometimes be found less outwardly religious than some other men and will greatly shock them by being so. The godly man has an unction from the Holy One to understand his will ; he goes straight to the Lord's business ; like our blessed Lord he finishes the work given him to do, while the

merely religious man is often so occupied with his forms that, like the Pharisee, he neglects the structure for which forms are but the scaffolding ; in paying his tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, he omits the weightier matters — justice, mercy, and truth.” — *W. G. Blaikie*.

JONATHAN SAVED. Saul discovered Jonathan's innocent error through another evil to which his rash vow led : the people were so ravenous from their fasting that, as soon as the sun was set and the day ended, they flew upon the captured sheep and oxen of the Philistines, and not only killed the calves on the same day with their dams, which was against the law (Lev. 22 : 28), but, still worse, ate them with their blood. “The blood was the part of Jehovah, and for man to eat it was sacrilegious. This idea runs through the history of Israel (Deut. 12 : 16 ; Lev. 19 : 26).” — *International Critical Commentary*. The Jews to this day refrain from eating the blood of slain animals.

When Saul heard of this infraction of the law, he was greatly shocked, and ordered a great stone rolled into a convenient position, that the cattle might be laid upon it, and the blood thus run away ; moreover, he erected an altar, that the blood might be poured out upon it as a sacrifice.

All of this, however, was unavailing, for when Saul was minded to pursue the Philistines further that night, and asked the priest for a token of the divine favor, his mysterious oracle was silent. This led to an investigation as to whose fault it was, and the lot of the priest's ephod fell finally upon Jonathan. Saul's curse was upon him, and he must surely die.

“Saul's ban is regarded with as much reverence as Jephthah's vow (Judg. 11 : 35) ; but Jonathan's life, unlike that of Jephthah's daughter, is important to the whole nation, and Saul finds that his power is very strictly limited by the popular will.” — *Dummelow*. Indeed, when the people indignantly refused to allow the execution of the young hero who had saved the nation by his deed of valor, Saul was quite ready to submit.

JONATHAN'S ZEAL FOR OUR PRESENT-DAY TASKS. “Jonathan's deed was more than brave ; it was audacious to the point of madness. Reason would have laughed it to scorn ; military men would have called it insanity ; and people who count odds would have written it down impossible. Yet it succeeded. Jonathan's faith was of the kind that clothes itself with omnipotence.” — *Hastings*.

Equally heroic deeds have been accomplished by God's warriors in all ages. “History affords at every turn some impregnable fortress which was the despair of the wise and prudent, but was carried by some enthusiast with a rush.” — *Ian MacLaren*.

“What we want is *enthusiasm*. Don't you be afraid of it. Some people the minute you speak about enthusiasm think it is fanaticism. Do you know what the word ‘enthusiasm’ means ? — ‘in God,’ that is what it means.” — *D. L. Moody*.

“Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it.” — *Bulwer Lytton*.

“I would have you be like a fire well kindled, which catches at everything you throw in, and turns it into flame and brightness.” — *Marcus Aurelius*.

“A youth without enthusiasm means maturity without faith and old age without hope.” — *Westcott*.

Illustrations. Morley, in his life of Gladstone, describes “that sovereign quality of Courage which became one of the most signal of all his traits.” It was shown in parliamentary debates, in enduring criticism, in bold initiative, in patient waiting. “He had even the courage to be prudent, just as he knew when it was prudent to be bold. He applied in public things the Spenserian line, ‘Be bold, be bold, and everywhere be bold,’ but neither did he forget the iron door with its admonition, ‘Be not too bold.’”

“At the battle of Missionary Ridge a regiment made a desperate charge against the enemy. ‘Who ordered that charge ?’ cried the commanding general of an officer. ‘No one, sir,’ was the response ; ‘the men saw the need and the opportunity, and they dashed forward without waiting for orders.’ The world wants thousands of Christian warriors thus to see ‘the need and the opportunity.’” — *Allan Sutherland*.

“Our holy battlefield is as wide as the world. The needs are clamant. The opportunities of victory are on every side. Our Captain is calling ! What, then, shall it be ? Advance, or retreat ?” — *Rev. J. H. Jowett, D.D.*

LESSON X. — June 6.

SAUL'S FAILURE. — I Samuel 15.

PRINT 1 Sam. 15: 18-26.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, and Jehovah hath rejected thee.* — I SAM. 15: 26.

Devotional Reading : Ps. 119 : 33-40, 57-60.

Additional Material for Teachers : I Sam. 14 : 47-52.

Primary Topic : A KING WHO DISOBEYED GOD.

Lesson Material : I Sam. 15.

Memory Verse : We must obey God rather than men. Acts 5 : 29.

Junior Topic : HOW SAUL LOST HIS KINGDOM.

Lesson Material : I Sam. 15 : 13-26.

Memory Verse : I Sam. 15 : 22.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : WHY SAUL FAILED.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF SAUL'S CHARACTER.

Additional Material : I Sam., chaps. 13 ; 28 ; 31.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The Younger Classes. — In the Primary and Junior departments the teacher will dwell lightly on the destruction of the Amalekites, speaking of their wickedness and the punishment due them, and not entering into gresome details. Every child is tempted to disobey and to "make excuses," as Saul did. This is a very practical lesson for the children.

The Intermediate Classes. — These pupils will be helped by a broad view of Saul's life, which started out with so much promise and came to so sad a conclusion. Study the reasons for Saul's failure, and be sure to apply the lesson to the lives of your pupils ; they will be successes or failures as they obey God like Samuel or disobey him like Saul.

The Older Classes. — Saul is a type of a class of men found everywhere, and each of us has probably a little of Saul in him. The more mature students will find this lesson to be a good opportunity for an analysis of the strength and weakness of Saul — his modesty, reserve, courage, prudence, religious bent, over against his wilfulness, fitfulness, superstition, and deceit. The application to our own lives is made inevitably.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Professor Beecher's conjectural date for the war with the Amalekites

and the final break between Samuel and Saul is 1078 B.C.

Place. — Gilgal, the capital of the Israelites at this time, was between Jericho and the Jordan.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Amalekites in Hebrew history.

The story of the Kenites.

"Bans" in the Old Testament.

A study of excuses.

A study of Samuel's great saying, I Sam. 15 : 22, 23.

Why Saul was rejected.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Need of Whole-Hearted Obedience.

I. SAUL'S HALFWAY OBEDIENCE,

I Sam. 15 : 1-9.

Why destroy the Amalekites?

Why save the Kenites?

Why Saul spared Agag.

Our half-obediences.

II. SAUL'S ATTEMPTED EVASIONS,

I Sam. 15 : 10-21.

God's word to Samuel.

"I have performed the commandment."

"The people did it."

Lying to God.

III. SAUL'S PUNISHMENT, I Sam. 15 :

22-35.

Samuel's great declaration.

Saul rejected.

Saul's "confession."

"Samuel came no more."

The need of entire obedience.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Maurice's *Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*. Wilberforce's *Heroes of Hebrew History*. An admirable sermon, "Impulsiveness," in Vaughan's *Temple Sermons*. Another noble sermon, on 1 Sam. 15 : 22, in Dawson's *On Daily*

Life and Duty. Spurgeon's sermon on confession of sin (Vol. III.) has Saul's confession for one of its seven texts. Talmage's *Old Wells Dug Out*. William R. Huntington's *A Good Shepherd*. Jeremy Taylor's sermon preached at the opening of the Parliament of Ireland, May 8, 1661, on 1 Sam. 15 : 22, 23.

I. SAUL'S HALFWAY OBEDIENCE, 1 Sam. 15 : 1-9. The Amalekites were a powerful tribe occupying the wilderness south of Judah, extending southward to Sinai and southwestward to Egypt. Their founder may have been Amalek, the grandson of Esau (Gen. 36 : 12). They were a wild and wandering tribe, and a constant menace to the Israelites.

The Amalekites were the first to oppose the Israelites as they escaped from Egypt, but were defeated at Rephidim by Joshua through the prayers of Moses (Ex. 17 : 8-16), on which occasion punishment was promised at some time in the future. After



"Bringing of heads after battle. Scribes, standing before their tent doors, registered the number of heads cut off."—From Maspero.

the Israelites got to Canaan the Amalekites continued to attack them, combining now with the Moabites (Judg. 3 : 13) and now with the Midianites (Judg. 6 : 3). The time seemed ripe for bringing upon them the fate which their cruelty had so abundantly invited.

Another reason for the punitive expedition was that it might test Saul, and make clear whether he would rule under the authority of Jehovah, as the judges had done, or would set up his own will in opposition to Jehovah. Therefore the command which Samuel gave to Saul was very solemn and

explicit. Reminding the king of his selection and anointing by divine command, Samuel bade Saul, in just punishment for the sins of the Amalekites, to destroy the tribe completely with all their possessions, leaving no child, even, nor a single animal.

THE REASON FOR THIS STERN DECREE. It does not at first thought seem like the God of love whom we worship to condemn an entire tribe, women and children and cattle, for the sins of their ancestors and for the wickedness of the fighting men among them. But this is precisely what happens to-day in all lands. If a community allows an infectious disease to get a start, it does not confine its ravages to the board of health. If an ambitious ruler starts a war, its ruin involves many thousands of innocent ones. God wishes us to learn that we are our brothers' keepers ; and that where one member suffers, all the other members of the body suffer with it. Often in the course of history wide-reaching punishments like this have been necessary, involving the innocent with the guilty, because in no other way can nations be punished for national sins, and taught not to commit them in the future.

Saul made no objection to the commission ; indeed, he may well have felt honored by it. He mobilized his troops at Telaim, in the south of Judah, — an army of two hundred thousand infantry from other tribes, besides ten thousand from Judah, the region on the border of which the war was to be fought.

WHY THE KENITES WERE SAVED. The Kenites were nomads like the Amalekites, among whom they lived ; but they were on quite a different footing. A portion of them seem to have dwelt with the Midianites. Jethro, whose daughter Moses married, was a priest of Midian and also a Kenite. The Kenites were kind to the Israelites when they escaped from Egypt, and some of them accompanied the Israel-

ites as far as Jericho, afterwards settling in the wilderness of Judah. Heber, the Kenite, was living far in the north at the time of Sisera's overthrow (Judg. 4 : 17). "The word Keni in Aramaic means *smith*. Professor Sayce thinks they may really have been a tribe of smiths, resembling the gypsies of modern Europe, as well as the travelling tinkers or blacksmiths of the Middle Ages. This would account for their relations with the different peoples, among whom they would reside in pursuit of their callings." — *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. It is easy to see why they should be singled out from the Amalekites and not involved in the ruin of that evil tribe.

WHY SAUL SPARED AGAG. Saul conquered and destroyed the Amalekites from Havilah (perhaps a portion of the Arabian desert) to Shur (the desert northeast of Egypt), though some of them escaped, and we hear of their annoying the Israelites later. But intentionally he saved the best of the animals, probably from motives of greed and to satisfy his troops with booty; and, worst of all, he



The original in British Museum.

Rare Animals Brought Back as Trophies by the King.

spared the life of the Amalekite king, Agag. Perhaps it was "to grace his triumph and to be an evidence of his victory (Judg. 1 : 7); perhaps from a feeling of sympathy with a fellow king (1 Kings 20 : 32)." — *Cambridge Bible*. Perhaps it was through "pride, hope of ransom, an ill-timed emotion of pity, respect of persons." — *International Critical Commentary*. Whatever the reason, it was not a good one, in the face of the divine command not to spare him.

OUR HALF-OBEDIENCES. "Whatever moral difficulties lie, or seem to lie, for a later age, in Saul's commission against Amalek, there were none such for him. To be forbidden to save the best of the spoil; to be forbidden to reserve the conquered king to give splendor to the triumph — this was the difficulty. It was a call to self-denial, to unworldliness, to unselfishness; and Saul was unequal to it." — *Dean C. J. Vaughan*.

Saul could rise to half an obedience, but he did not hold out for a whole obedience. "There are some men who seem to have India-rubber hearts. If you do but touch them, there is an impression made at once; but they are not fixed in their character, and soon return to be what they were before." — *C. H. Spurgeon*.

"Saul tried to serve God and mammon. He would go a little on the way of obedience, and then he would leap the fence, and hold a little fellowship with the devil. He assumed that the Lord would be satisfied with the beginnings of obedience, and would pardon a small remnant of personal desire. It was like a man who had had smallpox in the house, and who was ordered to burn all the affected garments, but who decided to keep just one coat, and to burn all the rest! But to retain a rag is to allow the sovereignty of disease; and to have even a slight communion with the Evil One is to pay homage to his throne." — *Hastings*.

"It is noticeable that an Amalekite claims to have dispatched Saul on the field of Gilboa (2 Sam. 1 : 1-10). If we spare what God has commanded us to destroy, it may later destroy us. Take care in your obedience; you serve an exacting though loving God!" — *F. B. Meyer*.

Illustrations. "Ottacas, asked to kneel in the presence of Randolphus I., refused to do it, but after a while he agreed to come in private to the king's tent, and then he would kneel down before him and worship; but the servants of the king had arranged it so that by drawing a cord the tent would suddenly drop. Ottacas after a while came in, and supposing he was in entire privacy, knelt before Randolphus. The servants pulled the cord, the tent dropped, and two armies surrounding looked down on Ottacas kneeling before Randolphus. If we are really kneeling to the world while we profess to be lowly subjects of Jesus Christ, the tent has already dropped, and all the hosts of heaven are gazing upon our hypocrisy." — *T. DeWitt Talmage*.

13. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14. And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15. And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

"Partial obedience is complete disobedience. Disobedience which will not do a little thing is great disobedience. Trivial acts, especially when repeated, show deep-seated evil. There may be only a coil of the snake visible, but that betrays the presence of the slimy folds, though they are covered from sight among the leaves. The tiny shoot of a plant, peeping above the ground, does not augur that the roots are short; they may run for yards." — *Alexander MacLaren*.

II. SAUL'S ATTEMPTED EVASIONS, 1 Sam. 15: 10-21. II. Upon Saul's disobedience followed what the Old Testament writers call God's repentance. But by God's repentance it is not meant that God regrets what he has done, or that he is changeable; but, just as repentance in man is a change in his attitude toward God, a facing back toward God, so repentance in God is a change in his attitude toward man. And any change in our attitude toward God involves a change in God's attitude toward us: he can now forgive, or he is forced now to punish. Therefore when Saul transgressed in the matter of Agag, Jehovah made Samuel know that he "repented" of having made Saul king, he was no longer favorable to Saul. Thereupon Samuel, the man of prayer, cried unto Jehovah all night, praying that God would forgive the man who Samuel had hoped, against his better judgment, would be a good leader for the people. But Samuel's prayer could not be answered favorably.

12. And Samuel rose early. Early rising is characteristic of the great men of the Bible. The more important the thing each had to do, the more desirous he seemed to do it in the time of day when his powers were at their best. Saul came to Carmel, a town of Judah about ten miles southeast of Hebron, on Saul's way returning. There dwelt Nabal, and Abigail whom David married. Many ruins are now in that place. He set him up a monument (literally, "a hand"). "A Hebrew trophy in honor of a victory possibly had a hand carved upon it." — *Dean Payne Smith*. Went down to Gilgal. The national center near Jericho, where Saul went to offer his thank offerings. "In the same place where Saul's kingdom had been confirmed it was to be taken from him; and where the warning of the consequences of disobedience had been uttered (1 Sam. 13: 13, 14), the sentence on disobedience was to be pronounced." — *Cambridge Bible*.

13. Blessed be thou of Jehovah. A Hebrew form of salutation, as in Gen. 14: 19; Judg. 17: 2; Ruth 3: 10. I have performed the commandment of Jehovah. Saul seems by this bold claim to think that he can deceive Samuel; perhaps he was counting on the old man's forgetting the exact terms of the command. But Samuel had a good memory for God's word.

14. What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep? "Murder will out." "Be sure your sin will find you out." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked."

Illustration. "A man carries on a series of dishonesties and conceals them by expert bookkeeping, thinking he is safe from detection. But some morning he is startled to find that the stolen sheep have been bleating, and all the world knows of his speculations and embezzlements." — *J. R. Miller*.

15. The people spared the best. Sin is unmanly; it seldom takes its blame upon itself, but tries to throw it on others. Thus Adam cried, "The woman whom thou gavest me tempted me," blaming Eve and Jehovah in one breath. Thus Aaron said, "The people are set on evil," and "I cast it into the fire and there came out this calf" (Ex. 32: 22, 24), thus blaming the people and the fire. This was indeed a contemptible excuse. "The king who heeded the voice of his army in such a matter showed that he was not their leader, but their tool and their slave." — *F. D. Maurice*. To sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God. "Thy" God, as if Samuel ought to regard the act as in part a tribute to himself! Sin is hypocritical as well as unmanly; it always tries to hide behind some pretence, as men defend the iniquitous

16. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17. And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

18. And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

20. And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

liquor traffic under the guise of a love for "personal liberty." "The king who pretended to keep the booty for the purpose of offering sacrifice to the Lord his God was evidently beginning to play the hypocrite; to make the service of God an excuse for acts of selfishness, and so to introduce all that is vilest in king-craft as well as in priest-craft." — *F. D. Maurice*. And the rest we have utterly destroyed. How ready we are to excuse ourselves for neglecting half the commandments by magnifying the half we did not neglect! We are stingy, but we want it understood that we go to church regularly. We slander, but we pride ourselves on paying our bills. But obedience is not a matter of balancing.

16. **Stay.** "Stop!" cried Samuel, imperatively cutting short Saul's lying and hypocritical speech. I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night. Or "last night," as we should say. Samuel will now set off God's truth against Saul's falsehood.

17. **Little in thine own sight.** So Saul was at the time of his anointing (1 Sam. 9 : 21), and so, according to his own account, was he still, that he let the people's will dominate over him. **Wast thou not made the head?** Samuel is shaming Saul for his confessed subservience to the people; he had been acting in a very unkingly way.

18. **Utterly destroy the sinners.** When we are trying to excuse ourselves for wrongdoing, we should face ourselves with God's plain word. How paltry are all our evasions when placed beside a "Thus saith the Lord"!

19. **Wherefore then didst thou not obey?** Samuel knew that Saul could give no good reason, but we are to condemn no one unheard.

20. **Yea, I have obeyed.** Saul's only chance, as the only chance of every sinner, was to "throw himself on the mercy of the court." "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!" is the only plea that God will hear. But Saul, like most of us, tried to justify himself by lamely repeating his excuses. This time, however, he thinks he can improve upon them a little, so he boldly implies that he has brought Agag as *evidence* that the Amalekites are all destroyed, and that "the people" — not he himself — saved the best animals as God's share, to offer them to Jehovah in grateful sacrifice!

LYING TO GOD. "Not without good reason was Christ's only harsh and threatening reproof directed against hypocrites and hypocrisy. It is not theft, nor robbery, nor murder, nor fornication, but falsehood, the special falsehood of hypocrisy, which destroys all distinction between right and wrong in the conscience, deprives men of what is the true meaning of all human life, and debars them from all progress toward perfection." — *Tolstoy*.

"The heart that answers the touch of God's rebukes by sullenly closing more tightly on its evil, is preparing itself for the blow of the hammer which will crush it. 'He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' Let us beware of meeting God's prophet with shuffling lies about our obedience, and of opposing to the words which are loving though they

22. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

23. For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

24. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

pierce, the armor of impenetrable self-righteousness and conceit." — *Alexander Maclaren*.

III. SAUL'S PUNISHMENT, 1 Sam. 15 : 22-35. Saul's audacity could go no further, and Samuel waits for no more of Saul's lies. With a burst of noble prophetic fire he flashes out upon the recreant king one of the greatest utterances of all the Bible. It swings in a mighty rhythm, and should be printed as poetry :

Does Jehovah delight in offerings and sacrifices
As in obedience to the voice of Jehovah?
Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice,
And to harken than the fat of rams,

For rebellion is the sin of soothsaying,
Obstinacy is the iniquity of Teraphim.
Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah,
He has rejected thee from ruling over Israel.
[*International Critical Commentary.*]

The fat of sacrificed animals belonged to the Lord, and was burned upon the altar. Witchcraft included any attempt to pry into the future by the help of evil spirits. Saul in later days was very zealous to abolish witchcraft (1 Sam. 28 : 3-7), yet he himself consulted a witch. Teraphim were "good-luck" images, on which the superstitious relied to do for them what God alone can do. They were virtually idols.

This splendid utterance strikes the keynote of the messages of the prophets throughout the history of Israel, to and including Christ himself (Ps. 40 : 6-8 ; 50 : 8-15 ; 51 : 16, 17 ; Isa. 1 : 11-17 ; Jer. 6 : 20 ; 7 : 22, 23 ; Hos. 6 : 6 ; Amos 5 : 21-24 ; Mic. 6 : 6-8 ; Matt. 9 : 13 ; 12 : 17). They all plead for the reality of religion as against mere forms and ceremonies.

Illustration. J. R. Miller tells the story of a little girl who was forbidden to go to a certain lake near by ; but she went, and, to propitiate her father, gave him a basket filled with beautiful shells which she had picked up on the shore of the lake. With great sadness the father threw the shells away, saying, "My child, to obey is better than sacrifice."



Julius von Schnorr.
Saul Rejected as King.

"We are apt to make sacrifices of time and money and energy for God, and to comfort ourselves with the reflection that such as we are may be excused if in small lapses of temper we come short of the divine standard. No ; one sin mastered, one temptation resisted, one duty performed, is dearer to God than the most costly sacrifices." — *F. B. Meyer*.

24. **I have sinned.** Saul, always impressionable, was moved by the stern sublimity of Samuel's words just as he had been moved earlier to join the singing of the sons of the prophets (1 Sam. 10 : 10). He confesses his sin formally, but he shows by his continued blame of the people that he does not even admit his sinfulness. When David confessed his sin, he spoke quite differently (2 Sam. 12 : 13 ; Ps. 51 : 4). "To say, 'I have sinned,' in an

25. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.

26. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

unmeaning manner is worse than worthless, for it is a mockery of God thus to confess with insincerity of heart." — *C. H. Spurgeon*.

25. **Pardon my sin.** Notice that Saul does not ask Samuel to pray that God may pardon his sin; Saul's thought is no higher than man. He is thinking only of man when he asks Samuel to join him in public worship: he does not want to have a public break with so influential a man as Samuel; it would injure his royal authority. "Even at that moment, had Saul thrown himself at God's feet and asked for pardon, he would have been accepted and forgiven. Even though as a monarch his kingdom might have passed from him, as a man he would have received pardon. But his only thought was to stand well with the people, and he was prepared to make any confession of wrongdoing as a price of Samuel's apparent friendship." — *Hastings*.

26. **I will not return with thee.** Samuel had started to leave Gilgal, and Saul in his eagerness followed. Then came the final sentence, irrevocable because it had back of it God's irrevocable decree: Saul had rejected Jehovah, therefore Jehovah had rejected him.

28. Saul, in his eagerness, grasped Samuel by the coat, probably at the neck, to hold him. He took him by the collar, as we should say. The garment tore, and Samuel promptly used it as a parable: **Jehovah hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee.** Thus Ahijah tore his own robe into twelve pieces and gave Jeroboam ten of them, to indicate that God would give him the rule of ten tribes (1 Kings 11: 29-31). **Hath given it to a neighbor of thine.** "Neighbor is used in Hebrew in a very indefinite manner." — *Pulpit Commentary*. It does not necessarily mean some one dwelling near by. Compare Luke 10: 36. **That is better than thou.** David was a sinner, a great one; but he was a far better man than Saul because he truly repented his sins, and honestly tried to do God's will.

29. **The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent.** This title of Jehovah is used here only. It may mean the Victory or the Glory of Israel. Samuel says emphatically that Jehovah, who has just given his people victory over the Amalekites (merely using Saul as his instrument), will not lie, as Saul has just lied, nor change his mind, as a man might.

31. **So Samuel turned again after Saul.** He did not intend to show personal pique, and thus mar the effect of the sentence he had been obliged to communicate to Saul. Moreover, Saul was to remain king through the rest of his life, and Samuel would not harm the nation by inciting rebellion against him. The execution of the divine decree did not depend upon anything Samuel did or did not do.

32. **Bring ye hither to me Agag.** This was another reason why Samuel acceded to Saul's desire, that he might execute God's judgment upon Agag. The wicked king came to him cheerfully; since Saul, the warrior, had spared him, he surely had nothing to fear from this old priest.

33. **As thy sword hath made women childless.** Agag was a murderer, and suffered a murderer's fate. The verb translated **hewed in pieces** is found only in this place, and may mean nothing more than "caused to be executed." This was done **before Jehovah**, that is, before the altar of the Lord in Gilgal, since Agag had been banned by Jehovah.

35. **Samuel came no more to see Saul.** Saul went to see Samuel on a certain striking occasion (1 Sam. 19: 18-24), but the friendship between the two, that would have meant everything to Saul, and would have transformed his failure into success if he had been true to it, was broken off forever. The wilfulness of the king had cut him loose from God and man.

THE NEED OF ENTIRE OBEDIENCE. "One word occurs to all of us as we study Saul's character, the word Impulsiveness. Impulse, not principle, moved, dissipated, contorted his life. The word 'duty' was unknown to him. The very sight of a duty paralyzed him." — *Dean C. J. Vaughan*. He need not have yielded to his bad impulses, and he might have cherished his good impulses. If he had done so, impulse would have become the mode of his success instead of the cause of his failure.

"In the world nothing seems so intolerable as obedience ; for men esteem all laws to be fetters and their superiors are their enemies, and when a command is given we turn into all shapes of excuse to escape from the imposition. Thus every man thinks that authority is an encroachment upon his birthright, and never considers that Christ took upon him our nature that he might teach us obedience, and in that also make us become like unto God." — *Jeremy Taylor*, 1661.

"Obedience will be accepted whether the conscious determination is present or not. If obedience springs from habit, it may not be lovable, but it is useful, and it is always good. 'But,' you say, 'I often do not think when I do a thing in the course of daily duty.' 'My friend,' I reply, 'I am glad you do not; for it is possible to do right without thinking; it is the perfection of being.'" — *George Dawson*.

"Obedience to law is liberty." This fine motto, suggested by Senator Hoar, is engraved on the front of the court-house in Worcester, Mass. Obedience to the laws of music gives glorious liberty to the musician. Obedience to the laws of physics gives the aviator liberty to range over the whole heavens. Obedience to law never means loss or restriction; it means infinite gain.

LESSON XI. — June 13.

A SHEPHERD BOY CHOSEN KING. — I Samuel 16:1-13.

PRINT 1 Sam. 16:4-18.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward.* — I SAM. 16:13.

Devotional Reading : John 10 : 11-18.

Additional Material for Teachers : Psalm 2.

Primary Topic : THE STORY OF A SHEPHERD BOY.

Lesson Material : I Sam. 16 : 4-13.

Memory Verse : Even a child maketh himself known by his doings.
Prov. 20 : 11.

Junior Topic : A KINGLY SHEPHERD BOY.

Lesson Material : I Sam. 16 : 4-13.

Memory Verse : I Sam. 16 : 7.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE ROAD TO PROMOTION.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE POSSIBILITIES OF YOUTH.

Additional Material : I Sam. 16 : 17-23 ; Eccl. 11 : 9-12 : 1 ; Phil. 3 : 12-14 ; I Tim. 4 : 12 ; I John 2 : 13, 14.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The Younger Classes always take much pleasure in the stirring and beautiful story of the shepherd boy who was promoted to be a king's personal attendant. Help them to see in the story an evidence that faithfulness in the doing of small things always leads to larger things.

The Intermediate Classes will be aroused by the story of the choice of the future king, and the teacher will apply the narrative to their lives by telling them that right now the kings and queens of the coming world are being chosen among the boys and girls of to-day — the kings of religious work, of business, of commerce, of the law, of

literature, and so on. They are preparing themselves now for large places or small ones.

The Older Classes need to see in this fine example of appreciation of a boy something of the splendid possibilities that are wrapped up in the children around them, their own younger brothers and sisters, their own children, their own pupils. Urge the necessity of more work and better work with and for the children, if this country is to become what it should be.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Professor Beecher's conjectural date for the anointing of David is B.C. 1077 ; and for David's first appear-

ance at Saul's court with his harp, B.C. 1074.

Place.—Bethlehem, five miles south of Jerusalem. Saul's court was at Gibeah (Geba), his home town in Benjamin, about six miles north of Jerusalem.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Famous anointings in the Bible.

Shepherds in the Bible.

A study of Bible children.

"The last shall be first."

The nature of Saul's malady.

Musical instruments of Old Testament times.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Beginning of a Great Career.

I. A FATE-FILLED ERRAND, I Sam. 16:1-5.

Jehovah's new resource.

An old hero's timidity.

Bethlehem's fear.

Making ready a better future.

II. JEHOVAH'S CHOICE, I Sam. 16:6-13.

The natural human choice.

Jehovah looks on the heart.

"This is he."

How God selects his leaders.

III. DAVID, PRINCE OF SONG, I Sam. 16:14-23.

Saul's evil spirit.

David's training.

David wins his way.

Qualities that succeed in life.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Statues of David by Donatello (Florence), Ciuffagni (Florence), Michelangelo (Florence). Paintings by Fra Angelico (Orvieto), Baldovinetti (Florence), Raphael (Loggia in the Vatican). David Playing to Saul, by Rembrandt (Frankfort and the Hague), by Ernest Normand (English).

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

"The Call of David," a poem by John Henry Newman. Browning's famous and beautiful poem, "Saul," is a masterly picture of David playing before the insane king. "Saul and the Shepherd Minstrel," by Mrs. Sigourney. Poems on the same subject by Richard Wilton, George Wither, and R. S. Hawker.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Volumes on David by William M. Taylor, F. B. Meyer, Rev. W. J. Knox Little. Sermons on the lesson in *Sermons*, Vol. I., by Rev. John McNeill; *Twenty Sermons*, by Phillips Brooks; *The Knowledge of God*, by William Walsham, Bishop of Wakefield; *Sermons for Children*, by Dean Stanley; *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, by Dr. John Clifford. *Five Young Men*, by Rev. Charles R. Brown, D.D.

I. A FATE-FILLED ERRAND, I Sam. 16:1-5. Saul had proved a terrible disappointment to Samuel. He loved the brave and modest man, he saw the possibilities in him, and hoped great things for him. It was not his fault that the people rejected the more direct rule of Jehovah and insisted upon having a king. But Saul's wilfulness and deceitfulness had destroyed Samuel's hopes. The aged prophet, who had given his life so unselfishly to his people, was thrown into the depths of despair. Would that more men had the grace to mourn over national sins and public perils!

1. Jehovah said unto Samuel. By an audible voice or by an equally direct impression upon his mind. **How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?** We need to examine carefully the grounds of our mourning, for excessive grief or ill-founded sorrow is needlessly weakening. There is much over which we have a right to grieve, but to mourn too long is to question God's wisdom and get out of touch with his on-moving providence. **Seeing I have rejected him.** Samuel's grief, though entirely natural, implied in its long continuance a criticism of God's judgment. He should have acquiesced in it cheerfully, and asked God what was next to be done. **Fill thy horn with oil.** A plain direction, as Samuel would understand it, that he was to proceed to the solemn anointing and consecrating of the new king. **I will send thee.** Action is the best remedy for grief. If you have a great sorrow in your life, get an errand from God, and a plenty are to be had for the asking. The harder the errand, the surer the cure for your sorrow. **To Jesse the Bethlehemite.** Jesse was the grandson of Ruth the Moabitess and of Boaz (Ruth 4:18-22), and so belonged to the tribe of Judah. He doubtless carried on the farm of his grandfather. **I have provided me a**

4. And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5. And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

king among his sons. God has ample resources. If one leader fails him, he has another in reserve. God is not a workman with only one tool in his chest, a hunter with only one arrow in his quiver.

2. **If Saul hear it, he will kill me.** Samuel is growing timid in his old age. He had not hesitated before to cross the will of Saul to his face, and declare his rejection from being king. This, however, was a more direct step in opposition, and Saul would regard it as treason. **Take a heifer with thee.** Samuel was evidently wont to visit different places and offer sacrifices there for the people. He was to make such an errand to Bethlehem. That would not be a deceit, for it would be a real errand, and he would be doing a still more necessary and important errand at the

same time. We are not to lie, but neither are we to put it in the power of wicked men to thwart God's plans by disclosing them prematurely.

3. **I will show thee what thou shalt do.** Samuel, like Enoch, "walked with God." What a comfort it must have been to find all his course laid out before him! That comfort is open to every child of God to-day.

4. **Samuel . . . came to Bethlehem.** This famous town, formerly called Ephrath (Gen. 48 : 7), was the place near which Rachel died, the scene of Ruth's marriage to Boaz. Besides being the birthplace of David,



it became later a most sacred spot because our Lord was born there. It was at Bethlehem that St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin. The name means "the House of Bread" — fit name for the birthplace of the Bread of Life. The town surmounts a hill a little way east of the road leading from Jerusalem, five miles to the north, down to Hebron. **The elders of the city,** the heads of the Bethlehem families, city officers, **came to meet him trembling.** "Perhaps Samuel's visits were often made with the view of rebuking sin and correcting abuses, and hence their alarm; or the breach between him and Saul may have made the elders afraid of incurring the royal displeasure by welcoming him." — *Cambridge Bible*.

5. After declaring that his errand was a peaceful one, and that they need not fear, the prophet bade the elders sanctify themselves, that is, go through the customary ceremonial washings of body and clothing, and abstain from whatever might render them ceremonially unclean, according to the provisions of the law of Moses (Gen. 19 : 10, 14, 15). Jesse was perhaps so prominent among the elders that it was natural for Samuel to honor him by superintending personally the purification of his family, thus getting a chance to meet the members of the family in private.

MAKING READY A BETTER FUTURE. "In some wise way when the door of opportunity opens upon a trying situation there comes forth a man of sufficient size to perform the task. When the time is ripe for the Protestant Reformation Martin Luther is ready and walks in. When the day arrives for Napoleon Bonaparte to be sent to St. Helena and the peace of Europe restored, the Duke of Wellington, repre-

6. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him.

7. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for, *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

8. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

9. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

10. Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

11. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

senting British tenacity, is ready. When the hour has struck for American slavery to be destroyed by words and law and grapeshot, William Lloyd Garrison and Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant are ready. Back of every emergency God waits. He has his great right hand full of men and when the fulness of time is come he brings upon the scene his own appointed man." — *Rev. Charles R. Brown, D.D.*

II. **JEHOVAH'S CHOICE**, 1 Sam. 16:6-13. It must have been with much hesitation that Samuel entered upon his review of Jesse's sons. His first choice had turned out poorly; could he expect better results from this second choice? The old man's heart still yearned for Saul; could he love as well the young man who was to take Saul's place? It was a hard day for Samuel.

6. **Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him.** Eliab (probably the same as Elihu whom King David made ruler of Judah, 1 Chron. 27:18) was a tall fellow with a fine face, every inch a king, a good match for Saul. So thought Samuel, but "the day was gone when kings were chosen because they were head and shoulders taller than the rest." — *Dean Stanley.*

7. **Jehovah seeth not as man seeth.** The words in italics are supplied from the Greek translation, the Septuagint, having been lost by accident from the Hebrew text. Saul had been a king of fine appearance such as the people would like, for they did not look deeper than the surface; but this time God, who **looketh on the heart**, was intending to select a king to please himself, a king whose heart was right. For the thought of this noble verse compare 1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 139; Jer. 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Luke 16:15; Acts 1:24, etc.

"Suppose that for one whole day we were all of us enabled by miraculous power, and compelled as well as enabled, to look (as God looks) not on the outward appearance but on the heart of every one we saw, what a dreadful — what an intolerably dreadful — day that would be! How it would startle one with all manner of horrible discoveries!" — *The Bishop of Wakefield.* We should so live that such a day would find us ready and glad.

10. **Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel.** Of the seven only Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah are named. Of Shammah we know that he had two sons, Jonadab the wise (2 Sam. 13:3) and Jonathan the brave (2 Sam. 21:21). **The Lord hath not chosen these.** God appoints some to great tasks and others to small ones, to each his task; and if Eliab does his lesser work as well as David does his greater work, he has equal honor with God.

11. **There remaineth yet the youngest.** So young and unconsidered that it had not been thought worth while to call him from the field; and yet he would prove to be the greatest Israelite for a thousand years! Thus we often look down on the little ones of a home or a church, forgetting that among them is likely to be at least one, perhaps more, whom men will be proud to honor some day. **He is keeping the sheep.** God is most likely to call us to some great task if we are zealously engaged

12. And he sent and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.

13. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

in the little tasks which he has appointed. Thus Saul was hunting his father's asses when he was chosen king; thus Elisha was ploughing when he was chosen to succeed Elijah; thus Peter and John, James and Andrew, were fishing when Jesus called them to become his apostles. Tending sheep was a monotonous and lonely task, but it was one of the best possible schools for David. It put beauty into his soul and strength into his body. It made him resourceful. It made him thoughtful. It made him patient. It filled him with reverence. It gave him in great abundance the best qualities of Saul and many necessary qualities which Saul lamentably lacked. "David was pursuing the occupation usually allotted in Eastern countries to the slaves, the females or the despised of the family. He carried a switch or wand in his hand, such as would be used for his dogs, and a scrip or wallet around his neck,

to carry anything that was needed for his shepherd's life, and a sling to ward off beasts or birds of prey." — *Dean Stanley*. We will not sit down, around the table for the meal which always followed the sacrifice.



From Statue of David by Michelangelo.

Head of David.

12. Now he *was* ruddy. Fair-skinned and light-haired (with "gracious gold hair," as Browning says in his poem, "Saul"). These are regarded as great beauties in southern countries, where the hair is usually black and the skin dark. Esau is the only other person of whom the Bible uses this adjective (Gen. 25:25). Of a beautiful countenance. Literally, "with beautiful eyes." Goodly to look upon. As it is not said that he was tall, we may suppose that David was of ordinary stature; but the lovely and noble thoughts he habitually cherished must

have given him a very beautiful face, while his active, outdoor life made his bearing alert and graceful. Instantly Samuel had the divine instructions, Anoint him; for this is he.

13. Then Samuel . . . anointed him, by pouring on his head the sacred oil, in the midst of his brethren, the entire family looking on. But as the later story shows that David's brothers had no idea of the royal rank reserved for him, the meaning of Samuel's act was doubtless hidden from them. Perhaps they thought that the prophet was by this rite selecting David as a member of one of his "schools of the prophets," and the character of the lad would lend color to this supposition. "Josephus tells us that the prophet whispered in David's ear the meaning of the sacred symbol. Did the aged lips approach the young head, and, as the trembling hand pushed back the clustering locks, did they whisper in the lad's ear the thrilling words, 'Thou shalt be king'?" — *F. B. Meyer*. The spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. We have here the first mention of David's name, a name borne by no other Old Testament person, and meaning "Darling" or "Beloved," given him perhaps because he was the youngest of the family; or it may be a contraction for the fuller form signifying "Jehovah is beloved." As Saul's anointing brought him a special inflow of the Spirit of Jehovah (1 Sam. 10:1, 6, 10), so David's anointing was the beginning of his special supernatural preparation for his great task. "Why should not this day witness a similar transformation for you? The divine anointing awaits all who will separate themselves to God, and receive it for his glory." — *F. B. Meyer*.

HOW GOD SELECTS HIS LEADERS. "God is always preparing the world's kings. True rulers are never absent. They do not sit on thrones. They are with us in our families, or looking after our sheep, or keeping our books, despised by their elder brothers, and unrecognized by all; but when the clock of time strikes, they take their place and do their work." — *Rev. John Clifford, D.D.*

"David got his kingship because he took it. You can imagine David saying to Samuel, 'I beg to decline. Really, Samuel, you have landed upon me too suddenly; don't you see, prophet, I have no time to think of this? I was suddenly called in, and here you are going to make me king, with all that that involves. I have no ambition that way; it is not for me; give it to Eliab.'" — *John McNeill.* This is the way many talk when the kingship of Christian belief and action is offered to them.

III. DAVID, PRINCE OF SONG, 1 Sam. 16:14-23. We have now a sad and dark picture, in complete contrast to the bright and happy portrait of the shepherd lad. Saul had by this time developed the gloomy qualities that amounted to insanity.

14. The Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul. "The Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David," we have just read. This does not mean, of course, that God's Spirit could not have dwelt in equal power and blessedness with both; how gladly would he have done so! **An evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him.** This phrase, often repeated with regard to Saul, does not refer to the Spirit of Jehovah, but to his very opposite. The Bible everywhere, in both the Old and New Testaments, recognizes the existence of demons, whose wicked minds delight in tormenting men and leading them astray. God controls them, and uses them as the instruments of his will, always for the good of mankind. They are his scourges, to bring sinners back to himself, or at least to make them warnings to others. Saul was afflicted with what Professor Macalister in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary* calls "recurrent paroxysmal mania," and the ancients ascribed all such mental diseases to the influence of evil spirits. Now we know that, though insanity and sin are often closely related, mental derangement is often also the result of defective heredity, and co-exists with a pure mind and a holy life. But Saul manifestly brought this terrible condition upon himself.

"AN EVIL SPIRIT FROM JEHOVAH." "To put the very devil into God's hands gives rest: I can wait now; he is on a chain." — *Rev. John McNeill.* "The law is that a beneficent power, if we obey it, blesses and helps us; but the same power, if we disobey it, curses and ruins us. You obey fire, and she will forge your iron and cook your dinner. You disobey fire, and she will sweep your city in a night off the face of the earth. He that obeys, must feel the ever-present God in joy. He that disobeys must feel him in pain everywhere and forever." — *Phillips Brooks.*

15. Saul's servants. They were bold to tell the king just what was the matter with him, and they were wise in suggesting a remedy. The favorable influence of music upon insanity is well known. With other diversions, it is in common use in modern insane asylums. A famous instance is the melancholy of Philip V. of Spain, which made him incapable of attending to business. Farinelli, a celebrated musician, was invited to perform at a concert in a room next to the king's, and the music gradually restored Philip to health.

18. A man of war. This must be regarded as anticipatory of what was to come and as merely a recognition of the bravery which David had already shown as a shepherd (see 1 Sam. 17:32-36). **Prudent in speech,** a man skilled in words, eloquent. Perhaps David was already known as a poet, though few if any of his psalms that we possess had yet been written. Those that contain memories of his shepherd life also carry references to mature experiences. **Jehovah is with him.** This statement is made also of Abraham (Gen. 21:22), Jacob (Gen. 28:15), Joseph (Gen. 39:2), Moses (Ex. 3:12), Joshua (Josh. 1:5), Gideon (Judg. 6:16), and Samuel (1 Sam. 3:19). God was plainly the source of strength of all the great men and women of the Bible.

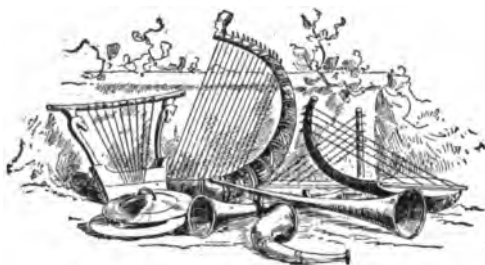
20. Bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid. These were plain presents for a king, but those were simple, pastoral times. Jesse very sensibly sent to Saul the produce of his own farm, and Saul doubtless received the gift in the spirit in which it was sent.

21. David . . . stood before him, had a definite position in Saul's court. **He loved him greatly.** David shows himself through all his life a very lovable person. His open, sunny nature was quite the opposite of Saul's moody and melancholy disposition, and, as so often happens, the opposite characters attracted each other.

He became his armorbearer, "attendant in war and body servant at home." — Prof. H. L. Willett, D.D.

22. Let David . . . stand before me. Jesse would be glad to grant the request, though it deprived him of a shepherd boy, and took from his home a beloved inmate, for he knew that at the king's court David would be trained in many useful arts, and

would have many opportunities for advancement and for extending his acquaintanceship.



Ancient Musical Instruments.

23. When the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, the king having fallen into one of his fits of despondency and perhaps of raving. David took the harp. The form of the verbs in this sentence implies frequent and repeated action. The harp used by David was a wooden instrument strung with gut or with spun and twisted cord. It was small enough to be carried around in

processions. The strings were plucked sometimes with the fingers and sometimes struck with a plectrum. So Saul was refreshed, and was well. Prof. H. P. Smith translates: "Saul would breathe freely, and would be well," understanding Saul's malady as accompanied by fits of suffocation.

QUALITIES THAT SUCCEED IN LIFE. "David became king because first of all he showed fidelity in the ordinary duties of everyday life. If a bunch of sheep became his opportunity he would do his work in such fashion that no one could do it better. He would lead them in green pastures and by still waters so that they should not want. His rod and his staff would protect them. He would learn the use of sling and stone so that 'he could sling,' as the old record says, 'at a hair's breadth and not miss.' If a wolf or a bear should attack his flock, he would be able to drive them off.

"The simple ordinary duties which belong to keeping sheep or to getting one's lessons at school, to meeting one's obligations in some modest position in office or store, or in doing one's best in a factory or on a farm, become a kind of dress rehearsal for the larger duties which lie ahead. You will find whole regiments of fellows who are saving up their energies to do something splendidly effective week after next. But week after next never comes to such men. They have mixed up the words of the promise — they think it reads, 'You have been unfaithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over everything.' When a man is going up-stairs he must put his foot first on the step which is at the bottom and then take the other steps in order. The same rule holds in the great business of living a man's life and doing a man's work in the world." — Rev. Charles R. Brown, D.D.

Outward beauty is a slight element of success compared with a beautiful character. "Not how you look, but what you are, ought to be the first care of your lives; for if you have a selfish disposition, a sordid soul, or a sinful life, your outward beauty will be like 'a jewel in a swine's snout,' and your bodily vigor will only be like the strength of a safe in which nothing worth preserving is locked up." — William M. Taylor.

David, though a boy, had the manly courage without which there is no success in life. Dean Stanley, in his children's sermon on David, uses as an illustration the splendid courage shown by five hundred boys who were on the training-ship *Goliath* when it burst into flames from one end to the other, and they all maintained perfect discipline. One boy, William Bolton, was the means of saving more than one hundred lives by keeping a barge alongside the burning ship as long as possible. He was another David.

"The real preparation of great minds for any worthy work is found in solitude, and silent communion of the soul with itself and with its God. If hard and exacting work is to be done the real strength, the real source of the power of it comes from this. David, quite young, had learned like Abraham to be 'alone with the Alone.' Before any of his great works the mighty Son of David, the Son of man, betook himself to solitude and prayer. St. Paul in after years stored up the forces, which he was to expend in such never-ending energy, in his lonely meditations and vigils in

Arabia ; and David was prepared for his great work by the hours of solitude by night and by day ' among the sheepfolds ' of his native hills." — *Canon Knox Little*.

" Whatever David is that is spiritual and Godlike is due to the blessed advent of God's Holy Spirit. David is ' the fruit of the Spirit.' " — *Rev. John Clifford, D.D.*

" The David of Israel is not simply the greatest of her kings ; he is the man great in everything. He monopolizes all her institutions. He is her shepherd boy — the representative of her toiling classes. He is her musician — the successor of Jubal and Miriam and Deborah. He is her soldier — the conqueror of all the Goliaths that would steal her peace. He is her king — numbering her armies and regulating her polity. He is her priest — substituting a broken and contrite spirit for the blood of bulls and rams. He is her prophet — presaging with his latest breath the everlastingness of his kingdom. He is her poet — all her psalms are called by his name. The truth is, in the estimation of Israel this man is a personification of the nation itself." — *Hastings*.

LESSON XII. — June 20.

THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD. — Psalm 23.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Jehovah is my shepherd ; I shall not want.* — Ps. 23 : 1.

Devotional Reading : Ezek. 34 : 11-16.

Additional Material for Teachers : John 10 : 1-18.

Primary Topic : HOW GOD TAKES CARE OF US.

Lesson Material : Ps. 23 : 1-6.

Memory Verse : He careth for you. 1 Peter 5 : 7.

Junior Topic : THE SHEPHERD PSALM.

Memory Verses : Ps. 23 : 1-6.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : TRUSTING GOD FOR EVERYTHING.

Topic for Young People and Adults : OUR DIVINE SHEPHERD.

Additional Material : Matt. 6 : 24-34 ; Phil. 4 : 19 ; 1 Pet. 5 : 7.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

In the **Younger Classes** the teacher will tell how an Eastern shepherd takes care of his sheep, beginning with the fold and tracing his work through the day until he brings the sheep back to the fold at night. All parts of the Psalm will thus be brought in. Make the application that it is thus that Christ, the good Shepherd, leads us through every day and all through our lives.

The **Intermediate Classes** will also be interested in the details of a shepherd's life, contrasting them with the practices of western shepherds. Bring out the ways in which God was a shepherd to David just as David had been to his sheep.

The **Older Classes** need to dwell a shorter time on the familiar Psalm, but will be led on to discuss the ways of God's providence, and the deep, underlying reasons for complete trust in him.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — David probably wrote this Psalm in his old age, perhaps in B.C. 1023, the last year of his life.

Place. — It may well be supposed that the Psalm was written in Jerusalem, and sung there in the services of the tabernacle on Mt. Zion.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Customs of an Eastern shepherd.

Comparisons of God to a shepherd throughout the Bible.

The shepherd hymns.

Christ the good Shepherd.

Christ's shepherd parables.

Where the shepherd analogy falls short of the reality.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Christ the Good Shepherd, by Plock-hörst, W. C. T. Dobson, T. Molitor, S. Parker.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.**SUBJECT:** God's Loving Care and Protection.**I. THE PROVIDING SHEPHERD, vs. 1, 2.**

God as a shepherd.
 God as my shepherd.
 God as my resource.

II. THE PROTECTING SHEPHERD, vs. 3, 4.

My perplexities and perils.
 My doubts and fears.
 My comfort and confidence.

III. THE PREPARING SHEPHERD, vs. 5, 6.

God preparing against my enemies.
 God preparing my destiny.
 God preparing my eternity.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Many paraphrases of this Psalm and poems on God and Christ as the Shepherd, by Crashaw, John Skelton, May Byron,

R. T. P. Pope, J. D. Burns, A. L. Waring, Horatius Bonar, Watts, Addison, Heginbotham, Rouse, Merrick, Doddridge, Swain, etc.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Tristram's *Natural History of the Bible*. Baroody's *The Syrian Shepherd*. A fresh and very full treatment in Hastings's *Great Texts of the Bible*. Commentaries on the Psalms by Perowne, Spurgeon, Briggs, Kirkpatrick, Davison, etc. Volumes on the Twenty-Third Psalm by Howard, Stalker, Culross, Gray, Knight (*The Song of Our Syrian Guest*), Duff, Mamreov (*A Day with the Good Shepherd*), Eli Barber (*The Birthday of the Twenty-Third Psalm*), Thorold (*The Presence of Christ*). Sermons in Jowett's *The Silver Lining*, Watkinson's *Mistaken Signs*, Shannon's *The Enchanted Universe*, George Adam Smith's *The Forgiveness of Sins*, Caroline Hazard's *The College Year*, Price Collier's *Sermons*.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM. The author is David, and the Psalm reflects his boyhood work on the fields of Bethlehem. "The reasons for believing this Psalm to be a legacy bequeathed to the people of God by King David are very strong indeed, and the assumption that he is the author throws light on every verse," — *James Stalker*. Most commentators believe that the Psalm was written in David's maturity, embodying the experiences of many years of trustful following of the good Shepherd.

THE LITERARY FORM of the Psalm is that of Hebrew poetry, which relied for its effect not on rhyme, but on the matching and balance of ideas, one line being echoed by the following line or contrasted with it.

"THE CHARACTER OF THIS PSALM OF PSALMS lies in its combined simplicity of diction, beauty of conception, and wealth of religious significance. These are blended with an art that is beyond art, attainable only by the trustful human spirit guided by the Divine. The meaning and helpfulness of this perfect little Psalm can never be exhausted so long as men, like sheep, wander and need guidance, and so long as they learn to find it in God their Shepherd." — *New Century Bible*. "The Psalm is unrivalled for calm serenity and perfect faith." — *Kirkpatrick*. "It is David's Heavenly Pastoral; a surpassing ode, which none of the daughters of music can excel." — *C. H. Spurgeon*. "The hardest and severest passages in the Old Testament find relief if we let the light shine on them from the Twenty-Third Psalm." — *Phillips Brooks*. "There is no other form of words which the world holds so dear, except perhaps the Lord's Prayer." — *Hastings*. "I do not believe any man is satisfied with himself until he has set out to follow the Lord as his shepherd. The reason we all love this Psalm is because the simple shepherd's trust is what we instinctively know to be our own need." — *Rev. Price Collier*. "Probably few Psalms are oftener read, or with stronger feeling, by careless readers than the Twenty-Third, singing of God's grace to the humble, and the Twenty-Fourth, singing of God's grace to the noble; and there are probably no other two whose real force is so little thought of." — *John Ruskin*.

I. THE PROVIDING SHEPHERD, vs. 1, 2. To the Eastern mind the thought of a shepherd is that of authoritative leadership as well as of kind protection and care. When, as often, a king is called the shepherd of his people, it is meant that he watches over their welfare, but also that he directs their paths. Both ideas are in this Psalm, but the predominant idea is of God's loving and powerful care of his children. That is one reason why the Psalm is so dear to anxious and needy humanity.

I. THE LORD *is* my shepherd, I shall not want.

1. **Jehovah is my shepherd.** God is often in the Bible referred to as the Shepherd of his people : Ps. 74 : 1 ; 77 : 20 ; 78 : 52, 70-72 ; 79 : 13 ; 80 : 1 ; 95 : 7 ; 100 : 3 ; Ezek. 34 : 23 ; Mic. 7 : 14 ; and so also of Christ : John 10 : 1-16 ; Heb. 13 : 20 ; 1 Pet. 2 : 25. "God has the shepherd-heart, pulsing with love. He has the shepherd-eye, that takes in the whole flock. He has the shepherd-nearness, about us and among us day and night. He has the shepherd-knowledge, understanding our desires better than we do ourselves. He has shepherd-strength, he is 'able to keep' us. He has shepherd-faithfulness, and we may fully trust him. He has shepherd-tenderness, nurturing our life from feebleness to strength."—*Culross*. "The great world is an easy place to lose one's self in, but Jehovah is my shepherd. There is never a night so dark in the valleys that he would not come to search for me. There is never a time of danger so dire that he would not stand for me with his rod and staff. There is never a pasture land too luscious for him to lead me to, and never a resting-place by still waters too gracious for him to seek out for me."—*Rev. E. W. Work, D.D.*

Illustration. "You have seen on a map these words : 'Scale, one inch to a mile.' How far is it from A to B ? Stretch out compasses — 'Ten inches.' What does that mean ? It means ten miles. That is just the text ; it is one inch to a universe, one inch to infinity ; 'shepherd' stands for Ineffable, Eternal, Infinite, Unthinkable ; God on a small scale ; God minimized that we may touch the shadow of his garment." — *Joseph Parker*.



From the Catacombs of St. Callistus.

Good Shepherd and the Seasons.

Spring as a boy gathers roses ; Summer presents her fruits ; Autumn reaps the ripened ears ; Winter as an old man burns the leaves. The Good Shepherd cares for his sheep all the year round.—*Farrar's Life of Christ in Art*.

Sixteen pronouns of the first person — I, me, my, mine — in these six brief verses ! This is the Psalm of appropriation, simply taking as our own the Infinite One, with all that that involves of peace and power and blessedness. "The Twenty-Third Psalm reveals itself to me as the song of a single sheep, a pet one, and not a sheep in a flock. Consequently it is the song of a human being who feels that God is his own shepherd, his and his only, and that he is the only sheep this Shepherd owns." — *Rev. Ancees T. Baroody, Ph.D.*

"Happy me ! O happy sheep !
Whom my God vouchsafes to keep,
Ev'n my God, ev'n he it is
That points me to these paths of bliss." — *Richard Crashaw*.

"'The Lord *is* my shepherd.' He saith not was ; he saith not may be, or will be. 'The Lord is my shepherd' — is on Sunday, is on Monday, and is through every day of the week ; is in January, and is in December, and in every month of the year ; is at home, and is in China ; is in peace, and is in war ; in abundance, and in penury. Let us live in the joy of the truth." — *J. Hudson Taylor*.

I shall not want. "God does not say he will supply every one of our desires, but every one of our needs." — *G. Beesley Austin*.

"Wherever he may guide me,
No want shall turn me back ;
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack." — *A. L. Waring*.

Illustrations. "I once asked a servant girl, 'Are you happy where you are ?' And I shall not forget the quietly confident way in which with beaming face she

2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

said, 'O yes, sir; I have twenty-two pounds a year, and all found.' 'All found.' That was evidently more to her than the small sum total of the actual pounds. 'I shall not want.' All is found." — *Rev. John McNeill.*

"I was once walking through a poorhouse with the manager, a wise and kindly man, and, being pained with what I had seen, I said to him, 'Tell me, now, what proportion of the inmates of this house have been well-doing people, and have been brought here by no fault of their own.' 'Well,' he answered, 'I know them all well, and I am acquainted with their histories, and I am sorry to say that there is not a single one of the sort you have indicated.' " — *James Stalker.*

2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. "How does the shepherd, the first thing in the morning, make the sheep 'lie down in green pastures'? Not by walking them and wearing them out, but by feeding them until they are satisfied. Sheep will go on walking long after they are weary, but the moment they are satisfied they will lie down. Now a day with the shepherd and his sheep in the uplands is the life of the believer with God. His first act is the satisfaction of the soul." — *Hastings.* "Show me a single person enjoying healthy repose, vital spiritual poise, rest calm and deep as a river just because life's tide is flowing full and free, and it is invariably the spirit centered in the Ever-living Heart of God." — *Rev. Frederick F. Shannon.*

"Where dost thou feed thy favored sheep?
O my beloved, tell me where;
My soul within thy pastures keep,
And guard me with thy tender care." — *R. T. P. Pope.*

He leadeth me beside still waters. Not motionless waters, ponds, but "waters of rest," as it is literally translated; waters that give rest and refreshment. "In the East the sheep requires water daily, owing to the heat and dryness of the climate."

— *Tristram.* "Leadeth" refers to the custom of Eastern shepherds, who never drive their sheep but always go before them, the sheep following. Compare John 10:4. "All over these Judean hills, at frequent intervals, there are deep, walled wells whose waters never fail. A good shepherd carries in his mind a chart of every well in his grazing area. Though there are many streams, the sheep cannot safely drink from them. At the well-mouth, with bared arms, the shepherd stands and plunges the bucket far down into the darkness, sinking it beneath the waters and shattering the stillness which till now has brooded there. He plunges and draws. Swiftly the rope coils at his feet as the laden bucket rises responsive to the rhythmic movements of his



Shepherd at the Well.

sinevy arms. Into the trough he pours the sparkling contents. Again the bucket shoots into the darkness of the well; again, and yet again, and when the trough is filled he calls the thirsty sheep to come in groups and drink. The lambs first, afterwards the older members of the flock, till all are served and satisfied." — *Hastings.*

3. He restoreth my soul : he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Thus God would lead his children, by the still waters of a quiet, contented life of simple obedience, not by the troubled waters of worldly ambition, the rapids of wild passion, the cataract of endless destruction. He knows the way that is best ; let us walk with him.

II. THE PROTECTING SHEPHERD, vs. 3, 4. If the shepherd had nothing to do but see to the food and drink and rest of the sheep, his would be a comparatively light task ; but dangers are pressing in upon his flock, wild animals and robbers, and there are the many perils of the wilderness into which the sheep may stray. God, the good Shepherd, is a protector as well as a provider.

3. He restoreth my soul. Man has indeed wandered from the right path, and he can be restored to it by the good Shepherd alone ; recall Christ's exquisite parable of the hundredth sheep. There may be some thought of that here, but the main picture is of a faint and weary sheep, whose strength is restored by the shepherd's ministrations. "He restoreth my soul : the soul he has himself created." — *Sir George Adam Smith.*

He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. "There is an insinuating and pervasive calmness in the very words, and the leisureliness of the long vowels induces something of the serenity which breathes through the entire Psalm. We cannot read them at a gallop." — *Hastings.* Note the *me* ; there is a special, individual guidance for each soul. God's "name" means his nature, his character, all that he is. He guides men for their own sakes, of course, because he loves them and wishes them to be true and happy ; but it is indeed fortunate for us that God's character and God's purpose, the greatest things in the universe, are back of our destiny, and that it does not rest on anything so fallible and empty as our own deserts.

Illustrations. "The Oriental shepherd was always ahead of his sheep. He was down in front. Any attack upon them had to take him into account. Now God is down in front. He is in the to-morrows. It is to-morrow that fills men with dread. God is there already. All the to-morrows of our life have to pass him before they can get to us." — *H. Howard.*

"Here and there in the grazing country of Judæa the traveler will come upon narrow, well-worn paths. Generations of shepherds and myriads of flocks have trodden these old ways. They are the recognized highways, traversing the land from well to well and from fold to fold. A competent shepherd has expert knowledge of all these paths." — *Hastings.*

"So many, many roads lie traced
Where wanderers may stray —
Roads twining, weaving, interlaced.
Roads sorrowful and gay."
— *Alice Cary.*

"What though the path be all unknown?
What though the way be drear?
Its shades I traverse not alone
When steps of thine are near."
— *George Matheson.*

Illustration. When the young man, John G. Paton, decided to become a missionary, he laid the matter before his parents. They told him then, for the first time, that from birth he had been consecrated to the gospel ministry, and that it had been their constant prayer that he would be guided to that work. From that moment his doubts were removed, and he went forward in confidence to one of the greatest missionary careers the world has known.

4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

4. **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.** Literally, "the valley of the dark shadow"; not death merely, but all gloomy experiences. David had in his mind the deep, dark, and dangerous ravines of which Palestine has many, especially in the region between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea and in the Jordan valley. He had taken his sheep through many of them. "In these cragged mountains there are innumerable caves, both natural and hewn in the solid rock. In these caves still live numerous wild beasts. Lions have been extinct since the days of the Crusaders, who hunted and killed till they exterminated as much life as they could during their occupancy of the country. Leopards are rare, and bears are now found only in the Lebanon ranges; but hyenas, wolves, wildcats, and jackals still roam at will over the country, as also birds of prey, such as eagles and vultures of great size and strength and beauty. All these are the natural 'enemies' of the flocks of sheep and goats." — *A. F. Mamrev.*

I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Even in the midst of danger and gloom the sheep are safe while their shepherd is with them. At this point the Psalm moves closer to God, the good Shepherd: it passes from "he" to "thou"; it no longer talks of him, but to him. That is what peril does for the soul of man.

Illustration. We walk *through* the dark valley. There is a way out of all trials, and the good Shepherd leads us through. Every sorrow, every difficulty, is like a dark tunnel; there is a way through it, and at the end we come out into the sunshine and the fresh air, the blue sky, the bright flowers, the woods and meadows and hills.

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. The rod is a club slung by the shepherd's side, used as a weapon to beat off evil beasts or kill serpents. The staff is a long, straight pole which the shepherd carries in his hand to help him in climbing, to lean upon when weary, to use in directing the sheep, to count them as they come from the fold or enter it, and to beat the grass and make sure that it is free from serpents. "Comfort," as used in the Bible, means more than to soothe and cheer with love and sympathy; it has its root meaning of strengthening, from the Latin *fortis*, whence come our "fort" and "fortitude." We can do all things through the good Shepherd, who strengthens us.

III. THE PREPARING SHEPHERD, vs. 5, 6. The Psalm looks backward and sums up God's mercies, it looks around and rejoices in God's presence and protection, and it also looks forward, gaining exquisite foreglimpses of the joys that are to come. Our Shepherd is of the future, of the endless years.

5. **Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.** Many have thought that David, when he wrote this line, was thinking of the courageous, kind way in which Barzillai entertained him when he was in flight during Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. 17: 27-29; 19: 31-39). There are two ways of viewing the Psalm from this point; some think that the shepherd comparison is here dropped, and the thought is of Jehovah as a host receiving the Psalmist as his guest; others consider that the metaphor of the sheep is continued; the "enemies" are still the wild beasts of the dark glen, and the "table" is the flock's "supper on the darkening wold, when the sheep feed richly on the guarded green." — *Hastings*. Either way, the Psalmist is thinking of God's continued care, of God's fellowship with his children, and of the Eastern custom which makes guest and host the closest friends if they have once tasted food together. "There is something so exuberantly triumphant in the Psalmist's boast! It is laughingly defiant in its security. The enemies frown at the open door, while he calmly sits down to a feast with his Lord." — *Rev. J. H. Jowett, D.D.*

Illustration. James Chalmers, the heroic missionary to New Guinea whom Robert Louis Stevenson admired so deeply, had many enemies among the natives who sought again and again to kill him and his wife; but each time when the would-be assassins approached the low fence which surrounded the rough mission house they were held back by some mysterious force. It was the power of God, making a safe table for Chalmers in the presence of his enemies.

6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Thou hast anointed my head with oil. "Fresh and fragrant oil, freely used in the East as a cosmetic, is associated always with festal occasions, and the neglect to provide it is somewhat of a slight on the part of a host who is entertaining guests; see Luke 7 : 46." — *New Century Bible*. Here also the shepherd simile may be continued. "It is the last scene of the day. At the door of the sheepfold the shepherd stands, and the 'rodding of the sheep' takes place. The shepherd stands turning his body to let the sheep pass: he is the door, as Christ said of himself. With his rod he holds back the sheep while he inspects them one by one as they pass into the fold. He has the horn filled with olive oil, and he has cedar-tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks, or a side scratched by thorns. And here comes one that is not bruised, but is simply worn and exhausted; he bathes its face and head with the refreshing olive oil, and he takes the large two-handed cup and dips it brimming full from the vessel of water provided for that purpose, and he lets the weary sheep drink. There is nothing finer in the Psalm than this." — *Rev. W. A. Knight*.

My cup runneth over. Literally, "My cup — abundance!" This may be the sheep's cup of water, as just explained, or it may be the brimful cup offered by the host to his guest. In either case David is thinking of the abundant life which God gives his children, the overflowing beauty and riches of the natural world, the abounding joys of home, of friendship, of society, and above all the ever-full satisfactions of the life of communion with God.

"O look, my soul, and see
How thy cup doth overflow!
Think of the love so free
Which fills it for thee so!"

"Heart of Christ, O cup most golden,
Liberty from thee we win;
We who drink no more are holden
By the shameful cords of sin."

— T. T. Lynch.

"How can our cup be kept overflowing? (1) By keeping it always under the spring. (2) By drinking fully. (3) By communicating to others." — *Hastings*. "The overflow of your cups shall not only be goodness and mercy as passive virtues, but the activities of goodness and mercy." — *Caroline Hazard*.

Illustration. "Annually when the ice broke up in Russia the Czar went in state to drink of the river Neva, and having drunk, it was the custom for the Czar to return the cup to his attendants full of gold; but year by year the cup became so much larger that at length a stipulated sum was paid instead of the old largesse. But however large the vessel we bring to God, and however much it increases in capacity with the discipline of years, God will still make it overflow." — *Rev. W. L. Watkinson, D.D.*

6. Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life. Goodness and Lovingkindness are pictured as two of God's angels, sent to attend David all his days, providing him with all blessings and warding off all evil. The word translated "surely" may also mean "only." "Nothing but goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me." The word translated "follow" has the meaning "to pursue," as if God were determined to overtake our self-willed wanderings with his goodness and mercy.

"Goodness and mercy
Ever attend,
Guidance and keeping
On to the end." — *Horatius Bonar*.

"The Psalmist does not ask that blessings shall continue to lead him, but that goodness and mercy shall follow him. They are not to be the guides of his life but the consequences of his life. The man who has been blessed of God is to go steadily on, and behind him, like a flock of sheep, will follow the good thoughts and merciful deeds of a better world." — *F. G. Peabody*.

And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever. Literally, "for length of days." This is the joyous benediction at the close of this glorious Psalm.

Illustration. "At Cadiz, in Spain, above the entrance of the Casa di Misericordia, or House of Refuge, is carved the inscription in the words of the One Hundred and Thirty-Second Psalm — 'This is my rest: here will I dwell.' The ear misses the two familiar words of the Psalm, 'for ever.' A friend has told me that as he looked up one day at the inscription and noticed the omission, the Superior, who happened

to be near, with a smile explained the reason. 'This Casa,' he said, 'is the rest of the poor — but not for ever.' — *Rev. Hugh Macmillan, D.D.*



The Good Shepherd. Plockhörn.

"Lord, thou art Life though I be dead,
Love's fire thou art however cold I be:
Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,
Nor home, but thee." — *Christina G. Rossetti.*

"The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want."

"I shall not want rest. 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.'

"I shall not want drink. 'He leadeth me beside the still waters.'

"I shall not want forgiveness. 'He restoreth my soul.'

"I shall not want guidance. 'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.'

"I shall not want companionship. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me.'

"I shall not want comfort. 'Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.'

"I shall not want food. 'Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.'

"I shall not want joy. 'Thou anointest my head with oil.'

"I shall not want anything. 'My cup runneth over.'

"I shall want nothing in this life. 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.'

"I shall not want anything in eternity. 'And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' — *Mrs. John R. Mott.*

LESSON XIII. — June 27.

REVIEW: THE NOBLE LIFE OF SAMUEL.

SELECTION FOR READING: 1 Sam. 12:1-5, 18-25.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *I will instruct you in the good and the right way.* — 1 SAM. 12:23.

Devotional Reading : PROV. 2:1-11.

Additional Material for Teachers : 1 Sam. 1:1-16:23.

Primary Topic : STORIES ABOUT SAMUEL.

Memory Verse : If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. John 14 :

Junior Topic : A BOY WHO BECAME A GREAT MAN.

Memory Verse : 1 Sam. 3:19.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : STRONG POINTS IN SAMUEL'S CHARACTER.

Topic for Young People and Adults : SAMUEL'S SERVICE TO HIS PEOPLE.

Several forms of review are suggested, that the teacher may choose the one suited to the age and advancement of his class, or perhaps make a combination of two forms of review.

I. A "HOW" REVIEW.

This review, suited to older classes only, will deal with difficult questions involved in or suggested by the various lessons of the quarter, questions that you may not have had time to discuss adequately during the quarter. Assign one of these to each student, and divide the time evenly among them. The following list of topics may prove helpful, but it is intended to be only suggestive :

- Lesson I. How to put religion into our State and national governments.
- Lesson II. How to utilize better than we are doing the power of women.
- Lesson III. How to bring together and use the righteous and brave minority.
- Lesson IV. How to single out and help the deserving poor.
- Lesson V. How to develop the religious capacities of children.
- Lesson VI. How to open the eyes of parents to their children's faults.
- Lesson VII. How to bring to bear upon public questions the decisive power of prayer.
- Lesson VIII. How to select the best leaders in church and state.
- Lesson IX. How to develop individual initiative without the loss of discipline.
- Lesson X. How godly men may influence the progress of affairs.
- Lesson XI. How to inspire children with lofty ideals.
- Lesson XII. How to make our lives serene and trustful.

II. A BARRAGE REVIEW.

The intermediates will enjoy the following form of review. Explain, if necessary, that a barrage is a curtain of shell-fire sent in front of an advancing body of troops — a shower of shells bursting in a line which is continually pushed onward as the soldiers run toward the enemy, thus protecting them from the attack of the foe.

Now for this review we are to have a question barrage ; indeed, we are to have two of them. Divide the class into two sides or "armies." Each side will prepare to lay down a barrage of questions about the lessons of the quarter ; the harder they are, the better, provided they are fair. The teacher will be the umpire as to this. First one side will lay down a barrage of twelve questions, and if the other side answers nine of them successfully, it will have "broken through the barrage." Then the other "army" will have a chance, and so on alternating. The army will be victorious that "breaks through" the largest number of times.

III. A FRAMED-PICTURE REVIEW.

This form of the review is best suited to the younger classes. The teacher will use the beautiful series of lesson pictures sold by the W. A. Wilde Company, the publishers of this book. Make twelve frames for the pictures of the quarter, using heavy pasteboard, and painting them ; gilding them is best. Having framed all twelve pictures thus, hang them in the proper order on the wall of the classroom, turning their faces to the wall.

Ask questions on the first lesson until the pupils have told enough about it ; then turn the picture outward, and ask a few questions about it. Continue thus till all the pictures have been disclosed. You may, if you think best, give the pictures to the pupils at the close of the session as souvenirs of the quarter's work.

IV. A SUMMARY REVIEW.

Ask the class to prepare, each member in his home, summaries of the leading facts of the quarter's lessons. The following heads may be given to the students, and any others the teacher wishes to use. Better give them out in writing, a copy to each : "Number. Title. Original Title. Persons. Places. Times. Chief Verse. Central Teaching." The "Title" is that given each lesson by the Lesson Committee ; the "Original Title" is one framed by the student — those given below are only hints for the teacher. The "Chief Verse" is the verse of the lesson which the student thinks most important. The "Times" are Professor Beecher's conjectural dates.

Each member of the class will bring his summary, and each lesson will be discussed in turn. The teacher will have a blackboard or a large sheet of paper and will construct a model summary as the students dictate, selecting in each case the contribution which seems best after discussion. The following, or something like it, will be the result :

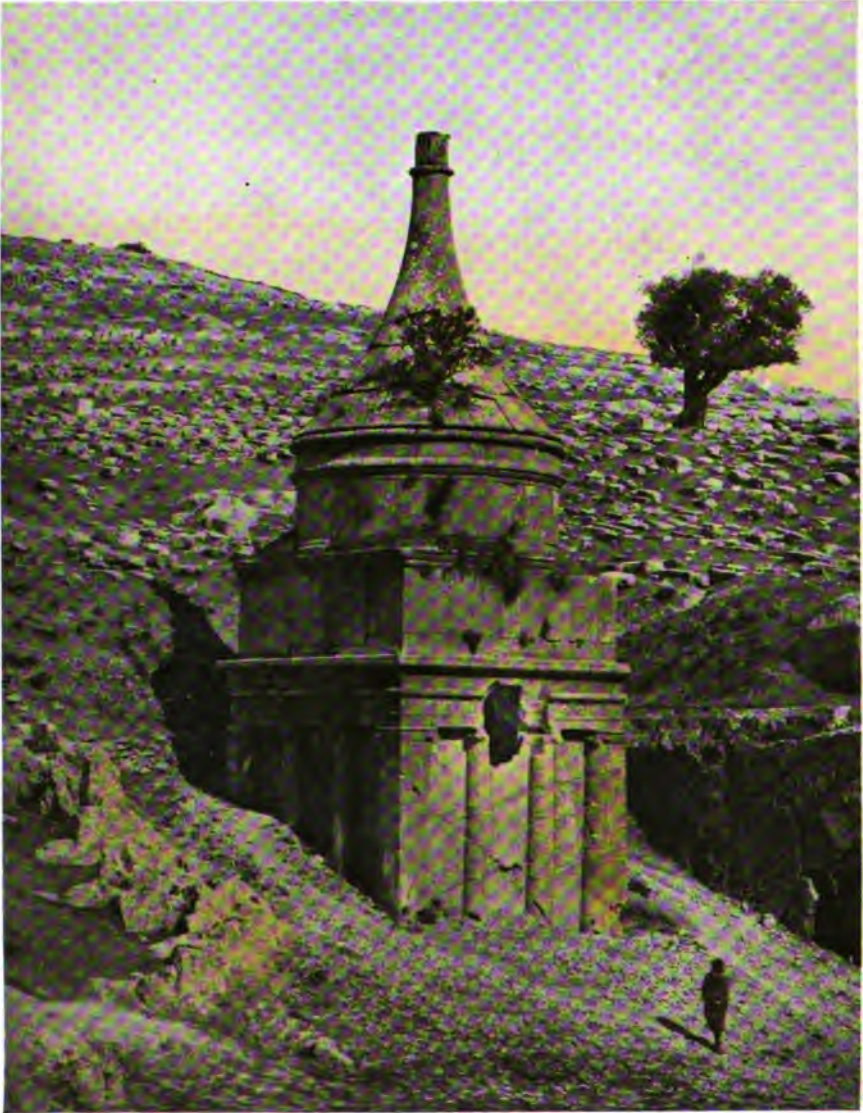
No.	TITLE	ORIGINAL TITLE	PERSONS	PLACES	TIMES	CHIEF VERSE	CENTRAL TEACHING
I.	Israel Ruled by Judges.	God Watching over His People.	Joshua Judges Israelites	Timnath-heres All Canaan	B.C. 1450	16	God gives his people every chance to be happy and prosperous.
II.	Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel.	Saved from Sisera.	Deborah Barak Sisera Heber Jael	Ramah Bethel Mt. Tabor Kedesh	B.C. 1351	14	God is stronger than all our foes.
III.	The Victory of Gideon's Band.	Three Hundred Enough.	Gideon Midianites Israelites Purah	Plain of Es- draelon	B.C. 1323	20	Victory is not to the mighty but to the obedient.
IV.	Ruth's Wise Choice.	An Idyl of Work.	Ruth Orpah Naomi Boaz Kinsman	Moab Bethlehem	B.C. 1173	16	God blesses the willing helpers.
V.	The Boy Samuel.	Listening and Led.	Elkanah Hannah Samuel Eli Peninnah Hophni Phinehas	Ramah Shiloh	B.C. 1160	10	God answers prayer.
VI.	Eli and His Sons.	Sin's Terrible Tragedy.	Eli Hophni Phinehas Benjaminite	Aphek Eben-ezer Shiloh	B.C. 1142	17	The end of sin is death.
VII.	Victory under Samuel.	Our Eben-ezers.	Samuel Israelites Philistines	Mizpeh	B.C. 1121	12	Repent and be saved.
VIII.	Israel's First King.	Our Way and God's Way.	Elders Samuel Saul	Ramah Mizpeh Geba	B.C. 1102	21	Small tasks have royal conclusions.
IX.	Jonathan and His Armor-bearer.	Courage Conquers.	Jonathan Saul Ahijah Armorbearer Philistines	Geba Michmash	B.C. 1085	6	One, with God, is a majority.
X.	Saul's Failure.	The Rejector Rejected.	Saul Amalekites Agag Samuel	Gilgal	B.C. 1078	22	Disobedience of God is self-destruction.
XI.	A Shepherd Boy Chosen King.	The Lowly Exalted.	Samuel Jesse Eliab, etc. David	Bethlehem	B.C. 1077	7	God regards not outward appearance but inward character.
XII.	The Lord Our Shepherd.	The Divine Guide.	David	Jerusalem	B.C. 1023	6	God is all things to his children.

V. A QUESTION-BOX REVIEW.

Take a pasteboard box which is large enough so that you can make a hole in the lid for the insertion of a hand. Write a large number of questions, covering all the important points of the quarter's lessons, both facts and teachings. Be sure to make each question quite independent of all the others, so that it will be entirely clear when read by itself. Write each question on a separate slip and fold it compactly. It will add to the interest if you write the questions relating to each character on slips of a distinctive color, all the Gideon questions on green paper, for instance, and all the David questions on red paper. Cover the box with a mysterious cloth, under which the pupils will insert their hands, taking turns. Each will draw out a question, read it aloud, and answer it, continuing thus until all the questions are answered.

VI. A "LECTURE" REVIEW.

This high-sounding name will be given, "for fun," to the three-minute talks which will be assigned to the pupils, each to treat some one character of the review. Thus you will have "lectures" on Deborah, Gideon, Ruth, Samuel, Eli, Saul, Jonathan, and David. These "lectures" may be written and read, if you think best, but preferably they will be spoken, and without notes.



THE TOMB OF ABSALOM.
(In the Valley of the Kidron.)



THIRD QUARTER

(SECOND HALF OF A SIX-MONTHS COURSE.)

LESSON I (14). — July 4.

DAVID IN CAMP AND COURT. — 1 Sam. 17:1-18:9.

PRINT 1 Sam. 17:40-49; 18:5-9.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Jehovah was with him.* — 1 SAM. 18:14.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 27:1-6.

Additional Material for Teachers : 1 Sam. 19:1-17.

Primary Topic : DAVID AND THE GIANT.

Lesson Material : 1 Sam. 17:17-49.

Memory Verse : My help cometh from Jehovah. Psalm 121:2.

Junior Topic : THE SHEPHERD BOY CONQUERS A GIANT.

Lesson Material : 1 Sam. 17.

Memory Verse : 1 Sam. 17:45.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT.

Topic for Young People and Adults : OVERTHROWING MODERN GOLIATHS.

Additional Material : Eph. 6:10-20.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The treatment of this lesson must be very similar in all the grades since the application is necessarily much the same. The story must be made familiar to all, if it is not already so; emphasis must be laid on David's trust in God, and the foundation for that trust; and the application made to the giants we all must fight.

In the younger grades the time will be largely taken up with the telling of the story, which can be made very vivid

without being at all gruesome. The pupils should be taught that we all have giants to fight, — Giant Selfishness, Giant Temper, and many others. They should learn that it means real fighting on their own part, but that they can at all times find help from the same source as did David.

The Intermediate and Senior grades can go somewhat deeper in the study of our giants, and how to fight them, — spiritual giants of doubt, etc., as well as the giants of bad habits.

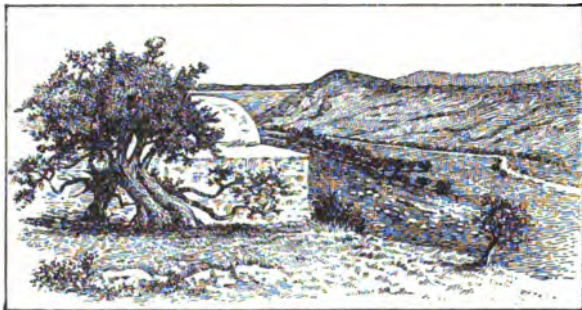
The Young People and Adults can

make a very interesting patriotic study, extremely appropriate for this Independence Day, — seeking out the giants that are threatening our country and what our young people can do to fight and overcome them.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — David, the youngest son of Jesse, was born in B.C. 1092 (Beecher). He was anointed king at the age of fifteen, in B.C. 1077. Three years later, perhaps, he went to Saul with his harp. He did not remain permanently at the court; and was probably not seen by Saul during his lucid moments enough to enable Saul to recognize him some months later in another place, and under other conditions.

The battle with Goliath was in B.C. 1073 (Beecher).



Valley of Elah.

Place. — David was born at Bethlehem, six miles from Jerusalem, at the home of his ancestors. (See Ruth 1:1, 19; 2:4; 4:11, 17-22.)

He fought Goliath in the valley of Elah, about sixteen miles southwest of Jerusalem.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The life of an eastern shepherd.

How did David's shepherd life affect his later character?

How did his shepherd life aid him in his work as king?

The Philistines: their character and location.

Goliath of Gath, and his armor.

Other giants in Hebrew history.

Giants in secular history, as throwing light on Biblical giants.

Lesson from David's sling.

Unproved armor.

Giants we have to overcome.

Moral victories; example in history.

Missionary Heroes and their conquests.

Fourth of July lessons from David's battle with the giant.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on 1 Samuel. *Histories* of the Hebrew people. *Biographies* of David, such as *The Life of David*, by Maclaren; *David*, — *Shepherd, Psalmist, King*, by Rev. F. B. Meyer; *David, the Poet and King*, by Newell D. Hillis; *David and His Friends*, by Louis A. Banks, D.D.; *David the King*, by Charles E. Knox.

Baring-Gould's *Sermons to Children*, "The Shepherd Boy" (Altemus).

Spurgeon's *Sermons*, "The Lion Slayer and the Giant Killer." Newton's *The Giants and How to Fight Them. The Giant Killer*, by A. L. O. E.

For missionary hero victors write to Young People's Missionary Movement, 156 Fifth Ave., New York. Some of these books are: Leslie's *Knights Who Fought the Dragon*; Hero Tales of our early religious history; Hamlin's *My Life and Times*.

THE LESSON IN ART.

David the Shepherd, Elizabeth Gardner. *Young David Rescuing the Lamb*, Gardner.* *David Playing before Saul*, Schopin,* Leyden.

David in the Camp of Saul, Schopin.* *David and Goliath*,

Michael Angelo,* Doré, Raphael. *David Praising the Lord*, Van Meire. *Triumph of David*, Roselle, Livens, Raphael.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: Giants, and Their Conquest.

- I. DAVID'S YOUTH, 1 Sam. 16.
- II. GOLIATH OF GATH, 1 Sam. 17:1-11, 23-31.
- III. DAVID IN ISRAEL'S CAMP, 1 Sam. 17:12-39.
- IV. THE FALL OF GOLIATH, 1 Sam. 17:40-54.
- V. SOME RESULTS OF THE CONQUEST, 1 Sam. 17:55-18:9; 19:1-17.
- VI. MODERN GIANTS AND HOW TO CONQUER THEM.

I. DAVID'S YOUTH, 1 Sam. 16. Bethlehem was perched upon a narrow ridge, 2000 feet above the Mediterranean, and 6 miles south of Jerusalem, then called Jebus, and occupied by the still unconquered Jebusites. "Bethlehem must have been a well-fortified place in Jesse's day, with those resolute and insolent enemies only six miles away." — *Knorr*. Though one of the oldest towns in Palestine (Gen. 35 : 16), it was likewise one of the most insignificant. Not a place we should select for such weighty events as happened there !

"David was the youngest son in a family of ten (eight sons and two daughters), the children of one Jesse, a householder and small proprietor who lived in Bethlehem, and farmed land in the neighborhood, but with a larger range for sheep."

David's Character. "The character and life of David are supremely fascinating, not only to holy souls, but to all men, because of their humaneness ; their variety ; their exhibition of traits of generosity and courage."

The Boys of To-day would be attracted to David. In the early morning he led forth the flock from the fold, marching at its head to the pastures. It was in these lonely hours, as he watched his father's sheep, that he attained that skill in minstrelsy which early gave pleasure to his neighbors.



Shepherd Tending Sheep.

It is interesting to picture the boy as he looked during these early years among the sheep. He was rather short in stature, as compared at least with his brothers, but his eyes were bright, and his face was fair — a notable distinction in that land of swarthy skins. He was "ruddy," probably meaning that he had red or auburn hair. He was dressed in a loose garment of rough camel's or goat's hair. By day this was girded around his waist by a leathern girdle. At night it was ungirded. For extra warmth he wore, probably, as do the shepherds of Greece to-day, a simple, sleeveless coat of sheepskin or goatskin, which was ample protection against the night dews around Bethlehem.

He carried with him, like the elder shepherds, the crook by which to help the sheep in time of need. Hung to his girdle was his stout oak club, for defence against wild beasts or robbers. But his special weapon was the sling, which was made by the shepherd, either of pliable leather, or, like one in the writer's possession, of woven goat's hair. This he always carried in his hand, or so near as to be always ready at a moment's notice. Eastern shepherds are very skillful in the use of the sling, and often cast to an immense distance, and with so sure an aim as not to hit the sheep, but to strike the ground just beyond, and so thoroughly to frighten the sheep and bring it back, when wandering.

David had abundant opportunity to use this sling, and without doubt became as perfect a marksman as the seven hundred Benjamites who could sling stones at a hair's breadth, and not miss (Judges 20 : 16). "There was a regiment of slingers in the Assyrian army, and another in the Egyptian army, and they could cast a stone with as much precision and force as now can be hurled shot or shell. The Greeks in their army had slingers who would throw leaden plummets inscribed with the irritating words, 'Take this.' " — *Talmage*.

David Anointed King of Israel. When David was fifteen years old came the final rejection of Saul by God, which took the throne of Israel from his family. Samuel, by the command of God, went to Bethlehem to anoint a son of Jesse to be the next king over God's people. We remember the story of how Samuel was forced to pass

by the seven elder sons, stalwart and goodly in appearance though they were, and wait until the youngest son of all was hastily summoned from the sheep to receive the anointing oil. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart."

The Man Whom God Chooses. "Curiously enough, the man whom God chooses is apt to be overlooked in the first place. Many of our own national leaders are examples. In smaller spheres it is often interesting to search for the reasons for promotion. A country pastor in a scattered community where gospel services must be carried to the people in many instances, if they were to have any, used to gather up a 'carry-all' load of young people to help in the cottage or schoolhouse prayer-meetings. There was one girl who could never be left out. He was glad of the others, but insisted on calling for her. Some one said, 'You have half a dozen singers better than Eva is — she hasn't much of a voice.' 'I know it,' he always replied, 'but what she has is serviceable. There isn't one of the half dozen I can depend upon to start the tune if I ask them to.' There is the secret — serviceableness. The man whom God chooses is the one who is fitted to his purpose like a tool to the hand."

II. **GOLIATH OF GATH**, I Sam. 17:1-11, 23-31. The Philistines lived on the border of the Mediterranean Sea to the west and southwest of Israel. They were hereditary enemies; "oppressions" by the Philistines being among the most numerous of those mentioned in the Judges. They were now again at war, and were



Coat of Mail.

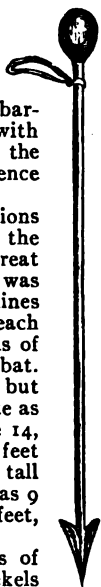
gathered in great force at Shochoh, in the Valley of Elah, about sixteen miles from Jerusalem, and eight or ten miles from Bethlehem. Here there is a narrow, deep ravine, three miles long (*Geikie*), "a valley within a valley," on the western side of which the Philistines encamped, while on the eastern side, guarding the pass into their own country, lay the forces of Israel, hastily summoned by Saul. "We may picture to ourselves," says Conder, "the two hosts, covering the low rocky hills opposite to each other, and half hidden among the lentisk bushes; between them was the rich expanse of ripening barley and the red banks of the torrent with its white shingly bed; behind all were the distant blue hill-walls of Judah, whence Saul had just come down."

"The natural strength of both positions was very great, since, if either army attacked, they must not only cross the ravine, but also climb the opposite slopes, and so place themselves at a great disadvantage; the long delay of the two armies, in face of each other, was probably due to this fact." — *Hastings' Dictionary*. Therefore the Philistines proposed a less hazardous mode of fighting. As the two armies faced each other, a formidable giant, Goliath of Gath, stepped forth from the ranks of the Philistines and challenged any Israelite to decide the war by single combat.

Goliath was 9 feet 8 inches high, taking the cubit at about 18 inches; but the length of the cubit varied at different times. Giants nearly or quite as tall have been noted in more modern times. The *London Times* of June 14, 1880, describes a reception at which were present Chang, of Peking, 8 feet 2 inches tall, and Brustad, a Norwegian, 7 feet 9 inches tall. A giant as tall as Goliath visited Berlin in 1857. John Middleton, the Englishman, was 9 feet 3 inches tall. Captain Bates of Kentucky was one inch less than 8 feet, and weighed 526 pounds.

The Armor of Goliath was evidence of his great strength. It was of "brass," i.e. either copper or bronze. His coat of mail weighed 5000 shekels — from 150 to 220 lb. avoirdupois. He wore a helmet, and his legs were protected by bronze greaves.

His Weapons were first, a javelin, or short bronze spear to hurl at the enemy. This is called a target in v. 6. It was slung over his shoulder. Second, a heavy spear, the shaft of which was like a weaver's beam; and its head, the metal part, weighed 600 shekels, — variously estimated at from ten to twenty-five pounds.



Javelin.

"Not considering himself in need of any shield, he let his squire carry that in front of him as a matter of state." — *Banks*.

Thus armed and plumed, the giant stalked down into the valley, in sight of Saul's camp, and in a voice answering to his huge form defied the armies of Israel. It "reminds us of De Bohun at Bannockburn, or of the Norman Taillefer at Senlac." — *Geikie*. For forty days he renewed his challenge morning and evening, his armor glittering in the sun, not even the bold Jonathan daring to accept it.

Why are ye come out to set your battle in array?

Choose you a man for you and let him come down to me.

If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants.

But if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants.

I defy the armies of Israel to-day.

Give me a man, that we may fight together.

Saul and all Israel . . . were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

III. DAVID IN ISRAEL'S CAMP, I Sam. 17:12-30. The three oldest of David's brothers were in the army of Saul, and Jesse, feeling anxious for news of them, sent David to the camp with some fresh provisions, for the soldiers there, as often in later times, furnished their own supplies. These provisions consisted of —

(1) an **ephah** — a little more than a bushel — of **parched corn**, "ears of wheat or barley plucked just before they are ripe and roasted or singed in the fire. It is still eaten in Palestine, and is especially fitted for provision for travellers or soldiers." — *Int. Crit. Com.* "To David's brothers they would be a pleasant reminder of home."

(2) **Ten loaves**, of bread, small, round, and flat. "In the dry inland air they soon become brittle." (3) As a gift to the colonel of the three sons — the **captain of their thousand** — **ten cheeses**, "round balls, each about a pound or two in weight, of white goat's milk cheese." — *Mackie*.

And take their pledge. "In the present [1914-15] raising of an army in Syria for the intended invasion of Egypt, each Turkish soldier had to bring with him a three-days' supply of bread. As sometimes David might not be able to see his brothers, on account of their military duties, and might have to send in his food supply by a messenger, it would be necessary to have the stamp of their signet ring on a leaf or piece of rag as a proof that the gift had reached its destination." — *G. M. Mackie, D.D., in S. S. Times*.

After a few hours' walk David reached the army, and left his carriage, that is, what he was carrying, "in the place of the wagons" (R. V.), "a rude rampart or barricade formed of wagons." — *Dummelow*.

It was the fortieth day of Goliath's challenge, and just as David reached the camp the giant strode out between the two armies, which were both in battle array (v. 21), and gave forth his insolent challenge, which no man dared to accept. David soon took in the state of affairs. "The young poet-shepherd of Bethlehem, having all a poet's dreams and ideals about the army of the Lord and the power that ought to belong to those who represent God, was shocked when he heard the blasphemy of the giant as he defied the armies of the living God. But David was still more shocked to see the cowardice of the people of Israel." — *Banks*.

His inquiring comments brought upon him the rebuke of his eldest brother, Eliab. He implied that David had run away from his duty to see what was going on; had come out of mere curiosity. "Who is taking care of those few sheep? It was not much we cared to confide to you, but even that little you have neglected." — *Vince*.

David kept his temper, merely asking, "What have I done? Surely my father's wish to learn of your welfare was enough to bring me here." Or it may be translated, "I merely asked a question." And he kept on with his inquiries until they reached the ears of Saul. "We may imagine the king's disappointment when he found that, instead of being an experienced warrior, he was only a fair-haired youth." — *Rowlands*.

Saul was, however, convinced by two arguments:

(1) The courage, skill, and power shown by David in slaying a lion and a bear in defence of his sheep.

(2) His trust in God as his deliverer from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear.

Then Saul, who had perhaps the only armor in the camp, tried to fit David for the work before him. **He armed him with a coat of mail and a helmet of brass**, and gave him his sword. But David was not used to such a weight, and it was worse than useless, so he took it off, and prepared to give battle with his own weapons.

17:40. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

42. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43. And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

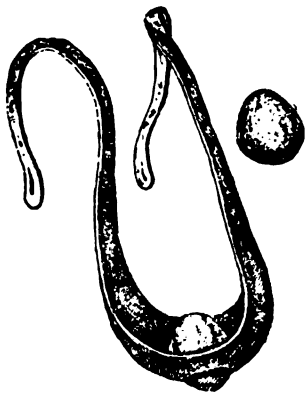
44. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

Goliath "was got up more to tell upon the imagination than for real fighting, and though like a castle, he might have been invincible if attacked with sword or spear, he was much too encumbered with defensive armor to be capable of assuming the offensive against a light-armed enemy. To David belongs the credit of seeing that the Philistine giant was a huge imposition." — *Pulpit Commentary*.

IV. THE FALL OF GOLIATH, 1 Sam. 17:40-54. David first selects those weapons well known to him as shepherd. He took his staff in his hand. The shepherd's staff from Palestine in my study is a heavy, oak club. "The Hebrew implies that this was neither his rod nor staff, — he had handed them over to his shepherd substitute, — but the ordinary stick which the peasant has on a journey for driving his donkey or mule, and for keeping off street dogs in the villages as he passes on his way." — *Mackie*. It was this, perhaps, which made Goliath say, *Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?*



Sling and Stone.

Then David chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, which ran at the bottom of the ravine between the armies. These he put into his shepherd's bag, or scrip, "a pouch or wallet made of goat's-skin or sheep's bladder. Into it the shepherd puts crusts of bread and pieces of cheese, and such first-aid requisites as a needle and thread, a small bottle of olive-oil, lint, and bandaging cotton." — *Mackie*. And his sling was in his hand, as he advanced toward the Philistine.

As David advanced Goliath shouted angrily at him, and cursed him by his gods, — such as Dagon, Baal, and Astarte. The combat thus became a question not merely between David and Goliath, but between God and idols; between true religion and false, as David fully expressed in his answer to the giant (v. 46) that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

True to the customs of the time Goliath as he advanced mocked at David, and promised to give David's body to the wild beasts and the birds of prey. David, also

47. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

48. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

18:5. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6. And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.

7. And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

true to custom, answered in kind; but he also said for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

Then, as the Philistine advanced upon David, *David hasted, and ran . . . to meet him.* And as he ran he took a stone from his bag, put it into his sling, and sent it against his foe. The stone *smote the Philistine in his forehead, . . . and he fell upon his face to the earth*, a statement that proves that Goliath was running, and bending forward.

There is a legend among the Jews that when Goliath cast his eyes upon David, the sight seemed so ridiculous, so amusing, that he threw back his head, and laughed out aloud. But this action threw his brazen helmet away from his temples, and just then the smooth stone from David's sling struck him upon his forehead. It is quite possible that his contempt for his opponent made him careless of his armor.

Professor Beecher suggests that "the giant attempted to seize the javelin that was 'between his shoulders' (v. 6), that he might hurl it at David, and in so doing lifted his face and exposed his forehead beneath the rim of the helmet. At that instant the sling-stone came, and David's victory was won."

When the Philistines saw their champion fall, from an unseen cause, they fled in dismay. The Israelites, aroused and inspired by what God had done through David, their faith kindled anew into flame, arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines, even to their own walled cities.

David ran, and standing on the prostrate giant drew out his great sword, and cut off his head, which was afterwards preserved at Jerusalem, while the young warrior preserved the armor in his tent. The sword was later put into the tabernacle, perhaps as a votary offering (1 Sam. 21:9).

V. SOME RESULTS OF THE CONQUEST, 1 Sam. 17:55-18:9; 19:1-17.

1. *Jonathan loved him as his own soul*, and with him made a covenant of friendship which lasted until Jonathan fell on the battle field (18:1-4). (For further discussion of this point see the next lesson.)

2. *David became an important part of Saul's army* (18:2, 5).

3. *David became a hero and darling of the people* (18:6-9). Either after the defeat of Goliath, or at a later time after a conquest of the Philistines (note marginal reading of "Philistines" in v. 6), the women came out of the cities and villages as the army passed through, to meet the conquerors and to express their joy at the national triumph. "This is a characteristic trait of Oriental manners. On the return of friends long absent, and particularly on the return of a victorious army, bands of women and children issue from the towns and villages, to form a triumphal procession to celebrate the victory, and as they go along, gratify the soldiers with dancing, instrumental music, and extempore songs, in honor of the generals who have earned the highest distinction." — *Jamieson*. Compare the triumphal pro-

8. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?

9. And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

cession of Miriam and the other women after the passage of the Red Sea (Ex. 15 : 20), the song of Deborah (Judg. 5 : 1), and the story of Jephthah's daughter (Judg. 11 : 34).

4. *David became an object of bitter jealousy to King Saul* (1 Sam. 18 : 8, 9 ; 19 : 1-17). Naturally Saul was very wroth to have a stripling, an unknown, placed higher than himself in the songs of the people ; and all the more because he knew in his heart that it was right that it should be so. But beginning at this time Saul's almost insane jealousy of David grew until he actually quarrelled with his son Jonathan who was taking David's part ; and David was forced to leave the court in order to save his life from the frenzied Saul. (See later lessons for David's fugitive life.)

VI. MODERN GIANTS AND HOW TO CONQUER THEM. The combat between David and Goliath has many points which illustrate and symbolize the conflict between good and evil in the world ; a conflict into which every one, old and young, should enter. There is a personal conflict with evil as when Christ fought the battle with temptation in the wilderness. There is a broader conflict with the wrongs and principles of evil that pervade humanity, into which every Christian enters for the redemption of the world, even as Christ the Son of God came into the world to save it from sin.

"John Bunyan has mentioned some of our modern giants : Giant Despair and Giant Grim ; Giant Pope and Giant Pagan. Perhaps we could think of a few more who have come nearer yet to our own experience. There is Giant Pride, and Giant Profanity ; Giant Untruth, Giant Envy, Giant Appetite ; all of these confront us, and with some of them we have had fights." — *C. S. Robinson, D.D.* "We may likewise think of the various forms of sin as so many giants to-day, including Laziness, Sulkiness, Selfishness, Falsehood, Alcohol, and many more. Indeed, everything may be regarded as a giant which is connected with the conflict of might against right." — *W. H. Griffith Thomas.* See Gal. 5 : 19-21 ; Eph. 6 : 12, etc.

David's preparation for his great victory came through a faithful use of his daily duties. There is no better way to-day for the young man or woman. Do your very best wherever you are, in whatever circumstances you are placed and God will lead you to your larger work. The story of a great majority of Christian workers is an illustration of this truth.

The Weapons of our Warfare. "No good ever comes of fighting Goliath with weapons fashioned after the pattern of his. We have those which Christ has given us, the sling and the staff. The more closely we keep ourselves to these, the better for us and for the cause entrusted to us. . . . 'Love unfeigned, the word of truth, the power of God,' these are the true armor of righteousness. 'In this sign shalt thou conquer.' The world has to be won to Christ by the means by which he overcame it ; and his soldiers have to fight the good fight with the same arms and armor as he wore and wielded." — *Alexander MacLaren.*

True Courage. "The greater part of the courage that is needed in the world is not of an heroic kind. Courage may be displayed in everyday life as well as on historic fields of action. The common need is for courage to be honest, courage to resist temptation, courage to speak the truth, courage to be what we really are, and not pretend to be what we are not, courage to live honestly within our means, and not dishonestly upon the means of others." — *Selected.*

The Battle is Jehovah's. "It is reported that once when an officer pointed out to Wellington that such and such orders could not be carried out, his only reply was, 'See that it is down in the order book.' Our Order Book leaves no loophole for failure. 'I would undertake to govern half a dozen worlds,' said a minister, 'if God called me to do it ; but if He didn't call me to do it, I wouldn't undertake to govern half a dozen sheep.'" — *Record of Christian Work.*

Some few years ago, in the south of England, three men who were travelling were interested in the entrance of a stranger just as the train was starting. His bag and sword-case indicated that he was a military man, and after a moment he said, 'That

was a close shave ; I've come from Gibraltar, and specially wanted connection.' Said one of the other men, 'I am glad you have joined us been warmly discussing the comparative merits of Napoleon and Wellington military man, we should like your opinion as to which of these was the gre strategically. We are of opinion that Wellington was the greater.' With able skill and graciousness the stranger proved that strategically Napoleon first place. 'Ah! then who won Waterloo?' was the rejoinder. In quiet and reverent voice the stranger said, 'God won Waterloo.' The speaker was General Sir John French." — *From the British Weekly, quoted in S. S. Times.*

LESSON II (15). — July 11.

JONATHAN BEFRIENDS DAVID. — 1 Samuel 20.

PRINT 1 Sam. 20 : 32-42.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *A friend loveth at all times ;
And a brother is born for adversity.* — PROV. 17 : 17.

Devotional Reading : John 15 : 9-15.

Additional Material for Teachers : 1 Sam. 18 : 1-5, 17-30 ; 19 : 1-24.

Primary Topic : A STORY OF TWO FRIENDS.

Lesson Material : 1 Sam. 20.

Memory Verse : A friend loveth at all times. PROV. 17 : 17.

Junior Topic : DAVID AND HIS FRIEND.

Lesson Material : 1 Sam. 20.

Memory Verse : 1 John 3 : 18.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : FRIENDSHIPS THAT ARE WORTH WHILE.

Topic for Young People and Adults : FRIENDSHIP : WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES.

Additional Material : John 15 : 13-15.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

A lesson story of a perfect friendship ; one which becomes an ideal and type of disinterested love ; the love of the Crown Prince of Israel to the shepherd boy.

The **Primary** and **Junior** grades must of course become familiar with the story of David and Jonathan and their wonderful friendship, with some emphasis placed upon what Jonathan was giving up in his love for David. Call attention to their own friendships ; what makes them friends and how they show it ; would they be ready to give up very much for their friends? Lead them to see the great Friend every child has in Jesus, and what He gave up to serve them as their Friend.

The **Intermediate** and **Senior** grades should discuss the real value of friendship, what makes it worth while, and what sort of friends should each make. Is true friendship shown in getting or in giving? What do we get from our friends? They too should see in Jesus

the ideal Friend of each one of his followers.

The **Young People** and **Adults** can spend a very profitable hour on the question of friendship in modern life. The friendships in the trenches, in society, in the church. What is friendship? and what influence has it had on the world?

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The events recorded in 1 Samuel 20 are placed by Beecher at about B.C. 1068. David's exile life, — this lesson and the next, — was from 1068-1063 B.C. (Beecher). The conquest of Goliath, our last lesson, was some five years earlier than the events of this.

Place. — Saul's palace was at Gibeath, 2½ miles north of Jerusalem.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Three pictures by Doré on this period are very good.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Crown Prince Jonathan, and his character.
David's character at this time.
What attracted them to each other?
Ways in which their friendship was expressed.
How can we make and keep friends?
The essential conditions of true friendship.
The power of friendship for good and bad.
Some friendships that are worth while.
Famous friendships in history and literature.
How may we be friends with Jesus?

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

On the history of the times and of David, the books referred to in our last lesson, and *Commentaries* on 1 Samuel. Matheson's *Representative Men of the Bible*, second series, "Jonathan the Generous." Tuck's *Revelation by Character*, "The Friendly Jonathan." Whyte's *Bible Characters*, "Jonathan."

On *Friendship*: Hugh Black's *Friendship*. *Friendship the Master Passion*, by H. C. Trumbull. *The Arithmetic of*

Friendship, by Amos R. Wells. "Friendship bulks largely in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Cicero." Montaigne's *Essay on Friendship*. Stories of classic friendships, as Damon and Pythias, Achilles and Patroclus, in stories from Greek and Roman mythology.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : A Study of Friendship.

I. A TYPICAL FRIENDSHIP.

Jonathan the Crown Prince.
David the Shepherd, Poet, and Warrior.

II. HOW THIS FRIENDSHIP WAS EXPRESSED, 1 Sam. 18 : 1-4 ; 19 : 1-7 ; 20 : 1-42.

III. THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP.

IV. FRIENDSHIPS THAT ARE WORTH WHILE.

V. THE GREAT VALUE AND POWER OF FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS.

I. A TYPICAL FRIENDSHIP. "The idea, so common in the ancient writers, is not all a poetic conceit, that the soul of a man is only a fragment of a larger whole, which goes out in search of other souls in which we will find its true completion. We walk among worlds unrealized until we have learned the secret of love. . . .

"The classic instance of David and Jonathan represents the typical friendship. They met, and at the meeting knew each other to be nearer than kindred. By subtle elective affinity they felt that they belonged to each other. Out of all the chaos of the time and the disorder of their lives, there arose for these two souls a new and beautiful world, where there reigned peace and love, and sweet content. . . . Jonathan's princely soul had no room for envy or jealousy. David's frank nature rose to meet the magnanimity of his friend." — *Hugh Black, M.A.*

Jonathan, the Crown Prince. "But for his father's great and disastrous transgressions, Jonathan would soon have been the second king of Israel ; second in succession to Saul, but second to no king that ever sat on a throne in those great qualities of mind and heart and character that give stability to a throne and add lustre to a crown." — *Whyte*.

"It is a curious commentary upon the doctrine of heredity that Saul, whose most conspicuous defect was a lack, apparently, of the very capacity for loyalty, should have a son whose most conspicuous trait was deep-rooted and unselfish loyalty to everybody with whom he was in any way related. . . . The secret of Jonathan's character was his loyalty to God, which gave balance, steadiness, and nobility to all the relations of his life." — *The Bible Record*.

Jonathan was a brave and noble soldier, and had accomplished some very daring feats of arms (1 Sam. 14 : 1-15). His good judgment is shown in 1 Sam. 14 : 27-30 ; his faith in God in 1 Sam. 14 : 6, 12 ; 19 : 5 ; 20 : 13, 42. He was "the Golden Rule exemplified." He was a model son, devoted to his unfortunate father. "To him, if to anyone, the frenzy of the king was amenable" (1 Sam. 19 : 6). He was older than David, and had been brought up under very different conditions, and was more mature and self-restrained ; but his was a great soul, a mighty heart, with a most wonderful capacity for loving.

David, the Shepherd, Poet, and Warrior. He was attractive in his person ; accomplished in music and song ; courageous even to heroism ; large hearted and generous ; and, above all, he had "a sublime faith, a perfect, childlike trust in the glorious arm of the Lord." At the same time Jonathan excelled him in supreme devotion and self-sacrifice.

Between these two arose an almost ideal friendship. "The soul of Jonathan was

knit with the soul of David." Their souls were interwoven together into a complete texture of friendship; one could not be weakened without the other suffering. "And Jonathan loved him as his own soul." This love in its highest perfection, mother love, and bridal love, is the finest type and illustration of the love of God to his children, as often expressed in the Scriptures.

II. **HOW THIS FRIENDSHIP WAS EXPRESSED**, 1 Sam. 18 : 1-4 ; 19 : 1-7 ; 20 : 1-42. Jonathan, the prince, took off his royal soldier garments, and gave them to David, together with his sword and "his famous bow, which was his special weapon" (2 Sam. 1 : 22), and his princely girdle. "It has been suggested that the reason for this gift was to enable his friend David, then poorly clad, to appear at his father's court in a fitting dress; but this kind of present was usual among friends in those remote ages. Glaucus and Diomed, for instance, exchanged armor of very different value.

" 'Now change we arms, and prove to either host
We guard the friendship of the line we boast.

For Diomed's brass arms, of mean device,
For which nine oxen paid (a vulgar price),
He gave his own of gold, divinely wrought:
A hundred beeves the shining purchase bought.' (*Iliad*, VI., 286-295.)"
— *Ellicott*.

It is not at all impossible that the young men confirmed their friendship by the very ancient rite of "the blood-covenant," of which there are historic traces from time immemorial. See *The Blood Covenant*, by Dr. Henry C. Trumbull, for the account of the manner of this covenant.

The Jealousy of Saul. We saw in the last lesson how Saul became insanely jealous of David when he found that he had become a greater hero to the people than the king himself (1 Sam. 18 : 6-9). He asked himself, "What can he have more but the kingdom?" and he "eyed David from that day."

Twice at least, as recorded in 1 Sam. 18 : 11, did Saul try to kill David with his javelin in his own palace. He was afraid of David, perhaps superstitiously so after his escapes, and therefore he made him a "captain over a thousand," hoping that he might be slain in battle. But "David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him." Saul feared him yet more, and made still stronger attempts to bring about his death in a natural way (1 Sam. 18 : 17-27), but David was preserved through all the dangers.

Jonathan now pleads for David, and through his influence over his father wins for him the promise, "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain" (1 Sam. 19 : 6), and David returned to the palace, and mingled with the courtiers and with Saul and Jonathan, "as in time past."

David's Final Departure from the Palace, 1 Sam. 20. The reconciliation with Saul seems only to have lasted while there was quiet in the land, and David could remain somewhat in retirement in the peaceful court. But before long "there was war again," and as colonel of one of Saul's fine regiments David went to battle with them, and conquered with them. Perhaps the incident of the singing women was repeated. But not long after, in one of Saul's frenzies he again sought to kill David with his own hand, and failing, sent men to David's house to kill him as he went out in the morning. But Michal the daughter of Saul,



David's Escape from Saul.

32. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

33. And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35. And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36. And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

37. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is not the arrow beyond thee?*

38. And Jonathan cried after the lad, *Make speed, haste, stay not.* And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

the wife of David, truly loved him, and foiled Saul's plans by aiding David to escape (1 Sam. 19 : 11-17). This time there seems to have been an almost organized attempt on the part of Saul to capture and kill David, but he failed.

Jonathan's Interesting Plan to Warn David. David seeing Saul's firm purpose to put him to death, appeals to Jonathan to find out the cause. At the feast of the New Moon David would be expected to be in his place at Saul's table. Jonathan plans that David shall stay away from the feast, and give Saul a chance to show his intentions toward him. In this interview, which was intended to be the final one if David was to flee from the palace, he expressly yielded up his hopes of the kingdom to David, only stipulating that David should not kill him when he became king, as was the custom of the times; and further that David should extend to Jonathan's family the protection he had promised to Jonathan himself. In the intensity of his love he made David swear again and again, even at last (v. 17, margin) by his love to him.

According to Jonathan's plan (1 Sam. 20 : 18-23), David was to hide at a certain specified time at "the stone Ezel," some well-known landmark; Jonathan was to find out the intention of the king, and come to inform David. The signal was ingeniously arranged so that no one but David in hiding could understand. The "this side," to the boy meant that David should come to Jonathan, that the danger was over; "beyond thee," meant that David must go away. Most probably Jonathan did not intend to see David again.

So David went his way, and Jonathan returned to the palace, and at the risk of his life tried to excuse David, and soothe his father's anger. Saul turned in fierce anger upon David's friend, though he was his own son. He insulted Jonathan by calling him "son of a perverse rebellious woman." "To curse a man's parents and ancestors generally is a familiar trait of the hasty Arab, but the sting of Saul's abuse lies in the insinuation that Jonathan was no son of his!" — *New Century Bible*. Then Saul reminded Jonathan that David was as much his rival as he was rival of the king, and Jonathan was foolishly destroying his own prospects in favoring the son of Jesse. Finally Saul commanded Jonathan to bring David to him that he might be put to death. Jonathan refused, asking (v. 32), **Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?**

But Saul was so angry that he threw a javelin at his son, to wound, if not to kill him. Jonathan rose from the table in fierce indignation, and would eat no meat, food, because his father **had done him, David, shame.**

At the appointed time Jonathan went out into the country to give his signal to David. He not only bade the boy to go beyond where he was, but he shouted to him, **Make speed, haste, stay not,** intended for the ears of David.

"It seems strange that David and Jonathan should have made the elaborate plan for 'cipher' communication by the shooting of the arrows and the message to the boy, when immediately afterward they joined each other. Perhaps they feared

39. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40. And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

41. And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

that Saul or his representatives might be with Jonathan; and then, finding that they were entirely alone, took advantage of the opportunity of fellowship again before separating." — *S. S. Times*. Or, perhaps he was so anxious to see David again that he threw caution to the winds, when the moment came. At any rate, after the boy had gone Jonathan went to David's hiding place, and the friends kissed one another in the Oriental fashion, and wept. "Talk not of grief till thou hast seen the tears of war-like men," says Mrs. Hemans.

Then they parted, never to meet again, save once, a year or two later, in the wilderness of Ziph, when David was pursued by Saul. Then Jonathan went out into the wilderness to comfort his friend, and "strengthened his hand in God" (1 Sam. 23 : 16).

III. THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP. "Friendship is the greatest thing that can enter any life because nothing else can so broaden life. It doubles at least the value of a soul, to itself, to others, and to God.

"This great thing, like all other great things, is brought about; it does not merely happen. Common speech is right when it talks about 'making friends.' Therefore no one is to sit down and whine because he has no friends. Bestir yourself! Friends can be made. Friendship depends on one thing alone, on Character. And because you can make character you can make friends.

"In this beautiful business of making friends the factory is daily life — common, daily life. . . . The tools are unselfishness, humility, forgetting yourself, human interest, courage." — *From Prof. Amos R. Wells' The Arithmetic of Friendship*.

There is always something in each friend to which the other can look up. Each finds the other his superior in some things; and it is this conscious deficiency in himself, joined with an appreciation of the opposite quality and the longing to possess it, that binds friends together. There must be real worth in both parties to a friendship, something to love, something worth loving.

True Friendship Costs. "The affection which Jonathan cherished for David proved to be a costly one, but he grudged not the charges." — *Vince*. It calls for conscience. It disregards other ties if they are wrong. Not even mother or father should lead us to wrong a friend.

True Friendship Endures. "The friendship that can cease was never a true one." — *St. Jerome*. It is unselfish. "To give, not to seek, is its prime characteristic." It is original. It has an inventive genius for helping.



From an old print.

Jonathan Signalling.

Above all true friendship is based upon religion. "Dare to pray over this, as you do over the other supreme things of existence."

IV. FRIENDSHIPS THAT ARE WORTH WHILE. "Choose friends, not for their usefulness, but for their goodness; not for their worth to us, but for their worth in themselves, and choose if possible, people superior to ourselves." — *Kingsley*.

It is of the utmost importance to avoid false friendships and companionships with the bad. Every power for good in true friendship is a power for evil in the false.

"The power of friendship is almost omnipotent, whether for good or evil. We never can know what we owe to our friends who are helpful and worthy, what they are to us, what they are doing in the building of our character, and what enrichment of life they are giving to us. Every friend whom we take into our fellowship, whether for a shorter or a longer stay, builds something into the walls of the temple we are rearing. A pure, gentle friendship becomes in its influence like a holy presence, in which we cannot do anything unworthy. It works in us, transforming us, inspiring in us all noblest aspirations. No one is a safe friend with whom we cannot pray. Let God choose your friends, and then every one of them will help you toward beauty, God, and glory." — *Dr. J. R. Miller*.

The friendship which is worth while will strengthen every good in a man. It will keep the finer faculties of the mind awake. It will show itself in little acts of mutual helpfulness, by dwelling on the virtues rather than the faults of friends. If we criticise our friend too much the time will come when we have no friend. Yet a true friend will tell of faults. "Behold what gross errors and extreme absurdities many do commit for want of a friend to tell them of them." But, according to Hugh Black, "True criticism does not consist, as so many critics seem to think, in depreciation, but in appreciation. More lives are spoiled by undue harshness than by undue gentleness." "Our friends see the best in us, and by that very fact call forth the best from us."

Illustrations of famous friends are found in all mythologies. An example is the friendship of Damon and Pythias, or more exactly Damon and Phintias. These two men lived in the first half of the fourth century B.C. and belonged to the sect of Pythagoreans, in Syracuse.

Phintias plotted against the life of Dionysius, the ruler of Syracuse, and was condemned to die. As he wished to arrange his affairs and for that purpose it was necessary that he should go to his home, Damon offered to place himself in the tyrant's hands as his substitute, and to die in his stead should he not return on the appointed day.

At the last moment Phintias came back, and Dionysius was so struck by the fidelity of the friends that he pardoned the offender, and asked to be admitted into their fellowship.

"The charm of the army is its comradeship." Our soldiers have left their homes and friends but they have found new friends, and some of the friendships have become very precious. Men have slept side by side in barn and trench, cooked their rations at the same little wood fire, and stood together at the hour of danger and imminent death. Many of them owe their lives to their comrades. There are a few songs that express this wonderful comradeship.

V. THE GREAT VALUE AND POWER OF FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS. The greatest privilege of life is that we may be friends of Jesus. We must be friends to him as well as he to us. He loves us whether we do him or not; but we are not friends unless we also love him, nor can we claim the benefits of that friendship. "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you."

"I've found a friend, oh, such a friend!
He loved me ere I knew him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus he bound me to him;
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties that naught can sever,
For I am his and he is mine,
Forever and forever." — *James G. Small*.

Friendship with Jesus is based on worth. We love him because he is so good, so noble, so pure, so lovable. And he finds something in the poorest and weakest of his disciples to love, and possibilities of greater worth; but only as they grow like him can there be the truest mutual friendship.

All that makes earthly friendship blessed, all the ways by which friendship is cultivated, all the forgetting of self and devotion to another which belongs to the highest forms of earthly friendship, apply in the highest degree to friendship with Jesus.

"In the Bible there is no sweeter, kindlier, no more beautiful picture of God than that which represents Him as the Partner of man in all his experiences of toil, of trouble, of sorrow, of defeat or of success. I am glad that I am able to give the assurance that you are never alone in your business of life, that the Partner, silent and unseen, is standing on the shore.

"If there should be in any heart a yearning really to do the work that Jesus wants his disciples to do, the one work he has in this world, it is necessary that you become a lover of the Christ. Why is it that Love is so important in this service? You are trying to make the world better by anything but Love; and only Love can feed the hearts of men." — *From The Dawn by Galilee, by Ralph Connor.*

LESSON III (16). — July 18.

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE. — I Samuel 26.

PRINT 1 Sam. 26:7-17, 21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.*—LUKE 6:27.

Devotional Reading: Ps. 31:1-8.

Additional Material for Teachers: I Sam. 24.

Primary Topic: THE MAN WHO WAS KIND TO HIS ENEMY.

Lesson Material: I Sam. 26.

Memory Verse: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Luke 6:27.

Junior Topic: "PAYING BACK."

Lesson Material: I Sam. 26.

Memory Verses: Rom. 12:20, 21.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD.

Additional Material: Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 12:17-21.

Topic for Young People and Adults: TREATMENT OF WRONGDOERS (by individuals and by society).

Additional Material: Matt. 5:43-47; 18:15-35; Rom. 13:1-7; 2 Cor. 2:5-11.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The **Primary** and **Junior** classes can, after learning the facts of the story, make a very practical application on "paying others back" for any wrong they have done us. Call attention to the fact that this seldom ends here, but the paying back is likely to go on for some time. Illustrate the true method by a story of doing good in return for evil, and let them learn two or three verses from the Bible on the topic.

The **Intermediate** and **Senior** classes will add to this a fuller Bible hunt for verses on forgiving our enemies, and show how David's treatment of Saul illustrates them.

Young People and Adults should make the distinction between our personal

enemies, those who do us wrong as individuals, and the enemies of society or our country. Discuss the treatment of criminals, and the condition of prisons. If possible get some speaker who is an authority on the subject to speak to the class. Other classes can study the effect of retaliation as shown in the feud, or Vendetta.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The various incidents in David's exile career (each considered as a separate topic).

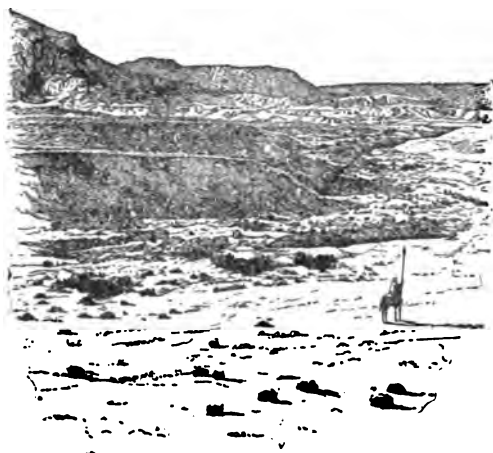
David's character as illustrated by these incidents. How this experience prepared him for the kingdom. Psalms that apply to this period of his life.

Why is revenge always wrong?

Can one ever "get even" by "paying back"?

The moral curse of hatred.

Treatment of wrong doers by society.



The Wilderness of Judea.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The exile, or wandering period of David's life, lasted seven years. Beecher puts the incident in our lesson in B.C. 1065.

Place. — David spent the greater part of the time in the Wilderness of Judea. This particular incident occurred at or near the hill Hachilah, on the western shore of the Dead Sea.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Books on I Samuel, and on David, mentioned in the previous lessons.

On the geography of the exile period, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, by George Adam Smith. McCoun's *The Holy Land in Geography*.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : Overcoming Enemies by Love.

I. DAVID'S EXILE EXPERIENCES, AND WHAT THEY TAUGHT HIM, I Sam. 21-25.

Eight Illustrative Incidents.

- II. DAVID'S GREATEST VICTORY, I Sam. 26.
- III. OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD.
- IV. HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THOSE WHO DO WRONG?

THE LESSON IN ART.

David and His Heroes, Von Schnorr.
David Showing Saul that He Had Spared His Life, Doré.*

I. DAVID'S EXILE EXPERIENCES, AND WHAT THEY TAUGHT HIM, I Sam. 21-25. For nearly seven years David, after being exiled from Saul's court, lived a wandering life in the wilderness, — driven from place to place, hiding in desolate regions and dwelling in caves; but gradually gathering about him a band of men, and always protecting the outlying regions, and maintaining his loyalty to his king and his country.

We can understand the whole story best by gaining a distinct picture of the scene where the various events took place. In Southern Judea was a large and rough wilderness; not in any sense a "desert," but wild and uninhabited, abounding in caves in its numerous hills, and such a place as would serve as a complete protection, unless, as was sometimes the case, David was betrayed by men who themselves were familiar with the country, and its hiding places. It was not a barren place, although it is probable that the greater part of the supplies for the band with David came from the farms and estates on the edges of the wilderness, as in the case of Nabal.

One cave especially was large enough, and well enough placed to serve as a real stronghold for the band, and it was their rallying place for a large portion of the time, — the Cave of Adullam. This is "now generally identified with a cave in the side of a deep ravine, some five or six miles southwest of Bethlehem, and called Wady Khureitun." The path to it is along a winding shelf of rock, having a fearful gorge below, and gigantic cliffs above, so that it could easily be defended against all the forces of Saul, and being five hundred and fifty feet in length, could hold a small army of defenders. Being near his boyhood's home, David was probably well acquainted with this cavern, which may account for his using it for such a period as his headquarters.

There are Eight Incidents of especial interest noted in the story of these seven years.

I. *The Flight to Nob*, I Sam. 21 : 1-9. Immediately after David's parting with Jonathan at Gibeah (our last lesson), David fled southward toward the Wilderness of

Judea. On his way, not many miles from Gibeah, he came to Nob, which was the religious capital of the nation, where were the high priest and the tabernacle with its services. In his terror and distrust he told a falsehood to Ahimelech the high priest, and as a friend and relative of the king he was allowed to eat of the sacred shewbread (referred to by Christ in Matt. 12 : 3, 4), and to take with him the sword of Goliath. The fruit of this lie was the massacre by Saul of the high priest, and all his family except Abiathar, and the ministering priests, eighty-five in all (1 Sam. 22 : 9-23).

Psalm 52, according to the title, was composed by David in reference to this event.

2. *The Flight to Gath*, 1 Sam. 21 : 10-15. David hasted away from Nob, and fled southwesterly to Gath, a city of the Philistines, the old residence of Goliath. Concealing his name, he openly entered the town, hoping to make himself acceptable as a minstrel, or in some peaceful capacity.

But he was soon recognized as the famous general who had been celebrated in festive songs throughout the land. The king soon learned of his presence, and David was sore afraid, "a comparatively new sensation to David." "He changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled [made marks] on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard." So Achish, the king of Gath, supposed him mad, "Have I need of mad men?" Madness being considered a possession of evil spirits, those afflicted with it were always sacred from injury. Similar stories told of Ulysses, Solon, Brutus, etc., are well known. In more modern times explorers have escaped from savage tribes by the same stratagem.

David therefore escaped safely to his own land, and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. "Even as a policy his flight to Gath was a blunder." He seems to have lapsed from his accustomed trust in God, and counselled with his fears rather than his faith.

Psalm 34, an alphabetical Psalm, appears from the title to have been written in reference to this experience.

3. *In the Cave of Adullam*. Here there gathered around him a large band of discontented people, "mostly victims of Saul's oppression," and of the growing discontent with his rule, on account of his recurring paroxysms of insanity, and consequent inability to rule his kingdom well. This "was the beginning of a justifiable revolution. The discontented men that gathered around David were the true patriots of the time. . . . This is evident from his message to Nabal in which he claims that he has performed all the duties of a government in protecting him from the incursions of the bordering tribes; so that the tribute he asked was no more than the just taxation of established authority." — *Prof. G. F. Wright*.

There were with him here about 400 men, gradually increasing to 600 (1 Sam. 22 : 2 ; 25 : 13 ; 27 : 2). Among them were his own parents and brothers — whom Saul probably persecuted on account of David — the prophet Gad, the high priest Abiathar, the son of the high priest Ahimelech (1 Sam. 22 : 22, 23), and his nephew Abishai, afterwards a great general (1 Sam. 26 : 6), and eleven mighty men of valor of the tribe of Gad (named in 1 Chron. 12 : 8-14), and 23 Benjamite warriors who could use both hands equally well in shooting arrows out of a bow (1 Chron. 12 : 1-7).

Soon, however, he placed his parents for safety, and better comfort, with the king of Moab, beyond Jordan, the native country of his great-grandmother Ruth (1 Sam.



A Cave in the Mountains Near Bethlehem.

22 : 3, 4). "Whatever his motives were in the choice of the place to which he guided them, we can but admire his filial thoughtfulness and devotion ; and we rejoice to see that under the shield of the warrior there still beat the loving heart of a son." — *Dr. W. M. Taylor.*



From an old print.

David Pours out the Water of the Well of Bethlehem.

away. David had been fighting bravely, against tremendous odds, — for he was always in the thick of the battle when the enemies of his country were attacking it, even though he was an outlaw. Tired out, his lips parched with thirst, perhaps somewhat homesick in his exile, he remembers the old well by the gate of his native town, and in a moment of longing says, "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate !" At these words of their beloved captain, three of David's mightiest men, one of them Abishai his nephew, forced their way through the enemy, drew the coveted water, probably in a leather bottle, or a soldier's helmet, and returned, panting, and perhaps wounded, to their place, and presented the sparkling draught to their lord.

Then the greatness of David shines forth. Although his thirst is beyond description he pours the water on the ground as a libation before the Lord. A deed like that showed that David was worthy of the devotion that they rendered to him.

"So spake the hero king, and all the host
Looked on and wondered; and these noble three,

The mightiest of the thirty, felt their souls
Knit closer to King David and to God."
— *E. H. Plumptre.*

5. *The Meeting with Jonathan*, 1 Sam. 23 : 1-28. The Philistines came again, and were robbing the threshing-floors of Keilah. David fought and defeated them, and saved the town. But the people were ungrateful, and he learned that they were about to betray him to Saul. Therefore he escaped into the wilderness of Ziph, near the hill Hachilah. But here also treachery followed him, and the Ziphites betrayed him to Saul. Saul came out against him with an army, and might have taken him, but a messenger came to him in haste with the word that the Philistines had invaded the land, and he took his army away to fight the Philistines, and David escaped.

But while Saul and his army were hunting for David Jonathan met David in the wood, "and strengthened his hand in God." They renewed the covenant of friendship which they had made, and parted for the last time.

Psalm 54, "a choice ode," set to stringed instruments, was written with reference to David's experiences at Ziph. And Psalm 63, "one of the most beautiful and touching Psalms in the whole Psalter," was written in the Wilderness of Judah, either at this time, or when he was driven from his throne by Absalom.

6. *The Cave of Engedi*, 1 Sam. 24. Saul again seeks for David, who is at Engedi, near the western shore of the Dead Sea. He enters the cave where David and his

7. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smile* him the second time.

9. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?

10. David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

11. The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

followers were concealed. But David refuses to kill the Lord's anointed, and simply cuts off the skirt of his robe to prove to him that he had been in David's power. Saul confesses that he is in the wrong, and returns home.

7. *Nabal the Churl*, 1 Sam. 25. This man lived at Carmel, in the south of Judah. He not only refused to provide David with provisions in return for the protection he had had from him, but returned deadly insult in his answer. David assembles his followers to avenge the insult. But Abigail, the wise and beautiful wife of Nabal, appeases David, and saves her husband and his followers from death. When Nabal hears of his narrow escape he has a stroke of apoplexy and dies within ten days. Abigail becomes the wife of David.

8. *At Hachilah*, a hill within sight of Ziph; our specific lesson for to-day, 1 Sam. 26.

II. **DAVID'S GREATEST VICTORY.** Again the Ziphites betray to Saul the refuge of David, and Saul gathers **three thousand chosen men of Israel** to seek him.

David hears that Saul is again hunting for him. "It seems as if David could scarcely believe that Saul would thus a second time pursue him," but he **sent out spies**, and finds that it is really so. He therefore "went in person to reconnoitre Saul's camp." "From some neighboring rock they look down upon the camp. The beasts and their burdens and the camp luggage lie in a circle as a rampart, just like a 'corral' on the western plains. In the centre can be seen a spear, stuck upright in the earth, showing where the king lies, just as an Arab sheik's tent is to-day distinguished." — *Knox*.

David decides to appeal to Saul's better nature, and plans a very dangerous act for that purpose. Taking with him Abishai, his nephew, and one of his very bravest men, he steals down from the hill in which he is hiding, and into the very camp of Saul, where discovery would mean instant death to both. He finds all the people fast asleep, with the king in the middle of the company. "Among the nomad people of the East, the encampments are usually made in a circular form, the circumference is lined by the baggage and the men, while the chief's station is in the centre, whether he occupies a tent or not." — *Jamieson*. The weary soldiers, feeling safe, are sleeping soundly, as Orientals do.

David's captain, Abishai, suggests to David that he be permitted to slay Saul, their great enemy, now in their hands. He adds, **I will not smite him the second time**, that is, he can kill him without arousing the soldiers around, and the two can easily escape afterwards.

It was a severe temptation to David. The motives influencing him to consent were (1) self-preservation; (2) desire to escape the persecution which was destroying all comfort in life; (3) revenge for what he had suffered; (4) the chance to immediately take the throne; (5) the pressure from his followers, who might not understand his scruples.

But David again refuses to allow any hand to be raised against his king, and gives his conviction that in His own good time Jehovah will release David from his danger, and give him the throne.

12. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

13. Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space *being* between them:

14. And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king?

15. And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

16. This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the LORD liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster.

17. And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.

21. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

So the two heroes stole quietly into the camp and took away Saul's spear, probably of beautiful and costly workmanship, as became a king, and the cruse or pitcher of water "which is usually, in warm climates, kept near a person's couch, as a draught in the night time is found very refreshing. Saul's cruse would probably be of superior materials, or more richly ornamented than common ones, and therefore by its size or form be easily distinguished." — *Cambridge Bible*.

Then the two men went to another hill over against the one where Saul was encamped, and shouted to Saul's general, Abner, deriding him for his negligence, and charging him bitterly with lack of fidelity in caring for the king, saying that his faithlessness was worthy of death. In proof that some one had come close enough to Saul to slay him he bade Abner see the king's spear and water cruse in his hands. Abner, as chief officer, was responsible for the king's safety with his life, according to Eastern custom.

Saul recognized David's voice, and they talked together. David made a strong appeal to Saul, who repented of his pursuit, and promised to let him alone for the future. David accepted his profession of friendship, but he was too wise to put himself into Saul's power. He well knew that his changed opinion was like the early dew which soon passeth away. Feeling sure that Saul would again seek him, and that he was always in danger of capture, David went again into the land of the Philistines, and remained there until the death of Saul.

David's Greatest Victory was the victory over himself, as shown in this story. It was a greater victory than his famous victory over Goliath, for "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." "Self-preservation is the first law of nature," but it is not the first law of God, who is above nature. We may not in any wise transgress God's law in seeking our own safety." "David comes forth from the test with a crown upon his head. . . . It is not the diadem of Saul, but the crown of justice which adorns him — it is not the royal purple which enwraps him, but a wisdom more than human, before which the most gorgeous robe becomes pale." — *Chrysostom*.

III. OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD. David practised the divine rule given a thousand years later by St. Paul, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." But do not do it *in order* to heap the coals of fire!

"The true way to 'overcome evil' is to melt it by fiery coals of gentleness. That is God's way. An iceberg may be crushed to powder, but every fragment is still ice.

Only sunshine that melts it will turn it into water. Love is conqueror, and the only conqueror, and its conquest is to transform hate into love." — *MacLaren*.

IV. HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THOSE WHO DO WRONG? There are two different answers to this question, dependent upon two great conditions: (1) those who do wrong against us, personally; and (2) those who do wrong against others, the state or the country.

If there is wrong done to us, Christ's word is, Forgive. In the prayer he taught his disciples is the petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." His word is "Love your enemies," forgive "until seventy times seven." And the parable of forgiveness in Matt. 18: 23-35, he concludes with the words, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Even in the Old Testament the same lesson is taught, — "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord," it is not our part. Our part is to feed, — do all possible good to, — our enemies. To overcome evil with good, so far as it is possible, and dependent on our actions.

"Forgiveness, love — it is a queer thing. It works just like electricity. If it cannot get out of you, it cannot get into you." — *R. H. Porter*.

"It's easier to shriek protest against wrong than to do right. When every man does his duty toward himself and his neighbor there won't be any need of dynamiting the man on the next block — but that's a long way off, and the dynamite may help. It wasn't invented in Christ's time but crucifixes were popular then. I don't know. Nobody knows. Some try dynamite and some try brotherly love and some just howl and beat the air and try nothing. I'd like to be here in 500 years and see how things have worked out — only I'm afraid human nature'd be pretty much the same as it is now, and if it was, there'd still be brotherly lovers and dynamiters and howlers. I'm hoping though that I'd have grown a little in the 500 years. Even a sprout or two'd be a start. There's lots of growing time in eternity.

"The idea was old enough. It went back to the Ten Commandments, and Buddha, and Confucius, and the beginning of thought. It had been preached at her from the most fashionable pulpits in the land; but some way or other, the little old man, with the thin, thoughtful face and the shabby clothes, and the quiet voice had made the thing sound different. Perhaps the howling and dynamiting had opened her eyes to the possibilities of brotherly love. Perhaps, after all, that was their part in the scheme of things. At any rate, here was a starting point. She would take herself in hand — and her neighbor; but who was her neighbor?" — *Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd, in How Could You, Jean*.

The Treatment of Wrong Doers by Society is not so easy a thing to settle. It includes all the question of the treatment of the criminals in our prisons. For fuller material for the discussion of this point write to the Massachusetts Prison Association, 39 Court St., Boston, Mass., or to similar associations in the other states.

One thing, however, is certain. Punishment of a criminal must not be for the purpose of revenge, but of reformation. There has been great progress in the view of the treatment of the criminal within the past few years. "The new view is attracting attention. It magnifies the manhood of the offender instead of his criminality. It emphasizes the obligation to prevent a boy or a man from becoming a criminal, by the personal work of individuals and the use of all the social agencies which keep men good. It tolerates no criminal-making forces.

"It is held that, if, in spite of all that is done, an offender is produced, and comes into the hands of the court, the good citizen should coöperate in saving him. If he goes to prison, the good citizen will insist that a definite effort be made there to reform him, and when he is released, the individual and the state should coöperate for his restoration. Always, his future, rather than his past, should be the object of attention.

"The offender will always be a part of society. He may go to court and to the prison, but, changed or unchanged, he returns to take his place in the community, like any other citizen, and every citizen has an interest in him. If he is 'overtaken in a fault' it is the business of good people to 'restore' him.

"Only coöperation between individuals and the public authorities, and the use of all the conserving agencies of society, can solve this great social problem and reduce the volume of crime." — *Secretary Warren F. Spaulding, of the Prison Commission*.

LESSON IV (17). — July 25.

DAVID SUCCEEDS SAUL AS KING. — 2 Samuel 2:1-7; 5:1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding.* — PROV. 3:5.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 18:1-6.

Additional Material for Teachers: 1 Sam. 31:1-13; 2 Sam. 1:1-27; 2:8-4:12.

Primary Topic: THE SHEPHERD BOY BECOMES KING.

Lesson Material: 1 Sam. 16:4-13; 2 Sam. 5:1-5.

Memory Verse: Trust in Jehovah and do good. Psalm 37:3.

Junior Topic: HOW DAVID BECAME KING.

Lesson Material: 2 Sam. 2:1-7; 5:1-5.

Memory Verse: 1 Sam. 16:7 (Jehovah seeth, etc.).

Intermediate and Senior Topic: THE SECRET OF DAVID'S SUCCESS.

Topic for Young People and Adults: TRUE SUCCESS AND HOW TO WIN IT.

Additional Material: Matt. 25:14-30; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 2:5; 4:1-8.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The development of both David and the nation are inseparably woven together in this lesson and both are worthy of careful consideration. The lesson also offers a good example of the truth that Christ taught by the parable of the talents: "Thou hast been faithful over few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

The younger grades will confine themselves almost entirely to the story of this lesson, becoming familiar with the facts, and, where they are sufficiently advanced, with the map of the country.

The older grades can, through a careful reading of the chapters in which David's story is told, trace the reasons for David's success, and contrast them with those which brought failure to Saul.

The Young People and Adults can add to this the general subject of the nature of true success, and the secret of its winning. What does the world consider success? Is it success from the Christian point of view? The lesson can be made vivid by illustrations of historical cases or of public men of our own times.

Use in the class not only the account in the present lesson, but the parallel account in 1 Chron. 11:1-3.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The death of Saul and Jonathan was B.C. 1063, according to Beecher's *Dated Events of the Old Testament*. The Assyrian inscriptions make it about B.C.

1017. David became almost at once king of Judah.

David was crowned king of all Israel seven and a half years later, B.C. 1055 (Beecher) or B.C. 1010 (Assyrian).

Place. — David was made king of Judah at Hebron, and was crowned king of all Israel at the same place. Later he made Jerusalem his capital.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The story of David's life as a preparation for being king.

Why was Hebron the best capital for David's first kingdom?

David's reign at Hebron.

The reign of Ish-bosheth.

How did this period prepare David for his larger kingdom?

How did it prepare the kingdom for David's rule?

How did David become king over all Israel?

David's conquest of Jerusalem.

What was the advantage of Jerusalem as capital of all Israel?

The reasons for David's success.

Is success won to-day by the same methods?

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on 2 Samuel. Books on David, such as Dr. Taylor's *David, King of Israel*; Deane's *David, His Life and Times*; Alexander Maclaren's *Life of David*; *David and His Friends*, by Louis Albert Banks. Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*. Charles Kingsley's *Gospel of the Pentateuch and David*.

Palestine and Its Transformation, by Ellsworth Huntington. *Jerusalem from the Earliest Times*, by George Adam

Smith. *The Holy Land and the Bible*,
by Cunningham Geikie.

THE LESSON IN ART.

David Crowned King, Memling.
King David, Rubens, Domenichino,*
and an unknown artist.*

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: David Winning His Kingdom.

- I. THE YEARS OF PREPARATION.
- II. THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN, 1 Sam. 28-31; 2 Sam. 1.
- III. DAVID KING OF JUDAH, 2 Sam. 2-4.
- IV. DAVID KING OF ISRAEL, 2 Sam. 5.
- V. THE SECRET OF DAVID'S SUCCESS.

I. THE YEARS OF PREPARATION. As David is now entering upon the great work for which God had been preparing him during thirty years, it is well to cast a brief glance over this period, and note the steps in his preparation.

1. He had a good inheritance of an honest, intelligent, and pious parentage. The atmosphere of a home of piety and intelligence is one of the greatest and most blessed factors in a child's training.

2. Just what his education was we cannot tell, but he certainly had an education, especially in the Scriptures then known, which would include the history of his nation up to nearly his own time. His duties led him to spend much time alone with nature and nature's God.

"One impulse from the vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can." — Wordsworth.

3. David was trained to work. His daily duties with the sheep gave him an opportunity for training in skill, attention, courage, government, business. Through them he became physically active and strong. In order to do his work well he must be an adept at defence, and he gained great

4. He had been dedicated to the was about fifteen years of age he was at the command of God, to be the Having been faithful in his when he could understand which God had chosen now clearly established.

a young man to what he is fitted his efforts in preparation years.

Childhood
of
DAVID

Shepherd
Attractive
Sling
Music
Faithful

Court
of
SAUL
Philistines
Goliath
Skill
Courage

DAVID'S
EXILE
Skill with men
Several years
exploits with
SAUL
Gaining wisdom

DAVID
KING

King for
7 years
at Hebron

DAVID
KING
of all
PALESTINE

DAVID'S STAIRWAY UPWARD TO SUCCESS

skill with the sling. kingdom. When he anointed by Samuel, future king of Israel. youth the time came the work and place to him. His ideal was It is a good thing for know somewhat early

for, and to bend all that direction. Such a would prevent many wasted

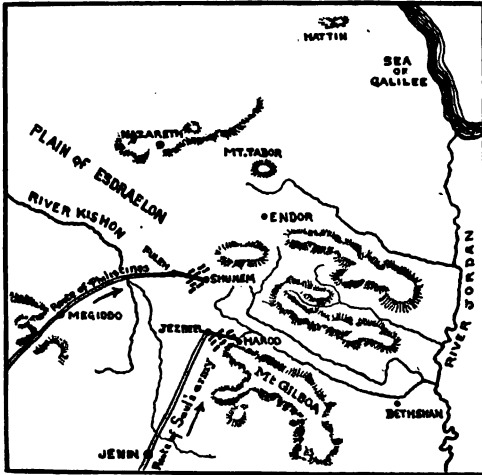
5. David's life at court gave him a new experience, in a very different kind of life; and yet a knowledge of that life was necessary to his future work. He learned the art of war; he was trained in courage; he had experience in resisting the temptations of the court life; he became acquainted with the leading men of the nation, and they learned to know him; he gained some of that courtly manner which adds lustre and power and attractiveness to his stern sense of justice and duty. Everyone should gain "the beauty of holiness."

6. David's exile life taught him many lessons of another side of life, which every wise ruler needs to know. He learned his weakness and the need of divine help. He learned entire trust in God under all circumstances. He became acquainted with the people; their grievances under Saul; their needs; their dispositions and tendencies. He had practice in the art of government. He gained further experience in war. He obtained a first-hand knowledge of the country and of its enemies. He had the opportunity to form a little band of fighting men who should be trained in his ways, given the same experience in the same kind of fighting, and become the trained generals and the "wise strategists who in the golden days of David's rule commanded his armies, and raised Israel from the obscurity of an 'Arab' tribe, who with difficulty held their own among the ancient Canaanites, to the position of one of the great nations of the old Eastern world." — *Ellicott*.

7. David's religious life, expressed in many of his Psalms, was an essential factor in his preparation. None but a deeply religious man could have accomplished David's task. He was far from faultless. He was wounded in some battles with temptation. He was affected in his outward conduct by some of the moral ideas of his time. But David's heart was right. He had many and splendid virtues; his failures were incidental, the weakness of humanity, for which he repented as in dust and ashes.

II. THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN, 1 Sam. 28-31; 2 Sam. 1.

The Philistines, the great enemy of Israel on the east, who had made trouble for Saul during a large part of his reign, finally made an excursion farther north than usual,



The Philistines were encamped near Shunem, where the Midianites were defeated by Gideon, whose army was at the fountain of Harod, near where Saul and his army were encamped.

1. *David's Dilemma*, 1 Sam. 29. David had a little more than a year before taken refuge from Saul in Gath, a city of the Philistines. From Ziklag, which was given him by the king, as a home for his family and his fighting men, he made numerous forays against the enemies of Israel who lived between his home and Egypt. When the king of the Philistines inquired where he had been fighting David always told him that he had been fighting against some portion of the people of Israel, and thus gained the full confidence of the king, who was assured that David shared the enmity which he knew was in the heart of Saul.

Therefore, when the Philistines gathered for this great conflict David, as one of the tributary chieftains of Achish, king of Gath, must of necessity go with him. This put him in a hard place, and shows how unwise he had been in his deceit.

But the "lords of the Philistines" did not share the confidence of Achish, and feared that in the presence of the host of Israel David and his 600 men would desert them for their own people. They therefore insisted that he be sent home before this chance presented itself. Achish against his own judgment yielded to them, and David returned to Ziklag, and found that some of his enemies had raided the city and taken his people captive. He pursued them, conquered them, probably on the very day of the battle of Gilboa, and rescued his people and his property.

2. *Saul and the Witch of Endor*, 1 Sam. 28. Saul was very down-hearted when the time came for the battle. He felt that God had deserted him, for "when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." On the night before the battle he hunted up a witch, the whole tribe of which he had previously driven from his kingdom, because they led the people away from God. His officers found in a cavern near Endor, eight or ten miles away, a woman who had the reputation of being a fortune teller. Under cover of

2:1. AND it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

the darkness Saul went around the Philistine army and consulted her. He opened his whole heart to her but received no relief (2 Sam. 28).

3. *The Exploit of Jabesh-gilead*, 1 Sam. 31:11-13. The inhabitants of the little city of Jabesh-gilead had reason to be grateful to Saul, and they showed their gratitude by going by night to the place where the Philistines had displayed the bodies of Saul and his sons, and taking them down, and burying them with the regular Oriental mourning. (See 1 Sam. 11:3, 9, 11.) Later David rewarded these men for their loyalty to their king (2 Sam. 2:4-7).

4. *The Amalekite*, 2 Sam. 1:1-16. It was thought by some that David would not only be rejoiced at the death of his enemy, but would liberally reward the first to tell him the good news. One, an Amalekite, hastened to take the message, claiming for the sake of a larger reward that he himself had killed Saul, and bringing Saul's crown and bracelet in proof thereof. But he did not know David. He was rewarded, most certainly, but not in the least as he had expected. "David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed? And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed."

5. *The Song of the Bow*, 2 Sam. 1:17-27. This is "one of the noblest odes of sorrow ever written by a poet. It is a most striking thing that in that ode there is not the faintest allusion to the personal troubles caused to him who wrote." — *Rev. W. J. Knox Little*. From a reference in it to Jonathan's bow, it came to be called "The Song of the Bow."

"All after generations have recognized the lyric grandeur of this noble poem. . . . And to this day, when a great man is carried to his sepulchre, the most appropriate music for the occasion is found in that exquisite composition which seeks to express in sound this threnody of David, and which is known among us as 'The Dead March in Saul.'" — *W. M. Taylor*.

It was included in "the Book of Jasher," evidently a collection of national poetry, compiled in, or soon after, the reign of Solomon.

III. DAVID, KING OF JUDAH, 2 Sam. 2-4. 1. After this.

The death of Saul and his sons, which opened the way for David to come to the throne. David enquired of the Lord. Herein he was both wise and religious. He would not take one step that was not right. The kingdom was from God, and God would guide him into the right and best way of reaching it. Whither shall I go up? The northern part of the kingdom was held by the Philistine invaders, and David was in no position to drive them out; it would have been madness for him to attempt it. The portions open to David were the regions east of the



From a photograph by Wilson.

The Old Mosque at Hebron.

Containing the Cave of Machpelah, the most interesting sepulchre in the world. Inside are the graves of Abraham, Sarah, Rebekah, Isaac, and Jacob.

The portions open to David were the regions east of the Jordan, and the hill country of Judea of which Hebron was the center. And

2. So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife, the Carmelite.

3. And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

4. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead *were* they that buried Saul.

5. And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.

6. And now the LORD show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

he said, **Unto Hebron.** This was plainly wise (1) because Saul's son Ish-bosheth and his general Abner were east of the Jordan attempting to hold the kingdom in Saul's family. (2) The region around Hebron was the home of David, and of many of his men (v. 3). He had spent most of his life near by, and his prowess as a leader and a statesman was well known. (3) Hebron was centrally situated in that part of the land over which David was at first to rule. (4) The ancient city of Hebron had been the home of his ancestor Abraham. In the side of a neighboring "ravine was the cave of Machpelah, where the fathers of the nation slept in God." Isaac and Rebekah had lived there. Says Professor Blaikie, "To live in Hebron, and not feel faith quickened to new life, would have indicated a soul dead to every impulse of patriotism and piety."

"*The Contrasted Spirits of Two Kings.* Bring your own wits to bear on your action, and then do not obstinately stick to what seems right to you, but ask God to negative it if it is wrong, and to confirm you in it if it is right. If we humbly ask him, 'To go, or not to go?' we shall not be left unanswered. We note the contrast between David's submission to God's guidance and Saul's self-willed taking his own way, in spite of Samuel. He began right, and, in the main, he continued as he began. Self-will is sin and ruin. Submission is joy and peace and success. God's kings are viceroys. They have to rule themselves and the world, but they have to be ruled by his will." — *Dr. Alexander MacLaren.*

2, 3. So David went up to Hebron, and his two wives also . . . and his men — the 600 of his chosen band — **every man with his household.** Henceforth there was to be no roaming in exile, but each was to settle down to the duties of peace. David was planning for peace, not for war, awaiting patiently the time when the larger kingdom should come to him. Most of the 600 doubtless belonged to this region, and were returning to their own homes.

4. **And the men of Judah . . . anointed David king over the house of Judah.** David had already been anointed privately by Samuel. But this was his public, formal inauguration by the people. The kingdom came to him, not only by divine appointment, but by choice of the people themselves (v. 7; 1 Chron. 11: 1-3). The two coincided.

"Why didn't the Philistines object? (1) Because David was still in name the friend and ally of the Philistine king Achish. (2) The men of Judah apparently took little or no active part in the battle of Gilboa. (3) The position of king of Judah did not mean very much. The Philistines looked upon it as a petty honor given by his own countrymen in token of their respect and friendship. (4) David led no uprising against his country's enemies. For seven and a half years he quietly worked and waited — another illustration of his patience and self-control." When David was made king of all Israel the Philistines at once attacked him, but were defeated (2 Sam. 5: 17-25).

David Reigned at Hebron in a quiet and peaceful manner, growing in favor with God and man, and laying the foundations for his great work of consolidating and reconstructing the nation. He took two wise measures. He had already, before coming to Hebron, sent presents to the local chiefs of the various districts of Judea (1 Sam. 30: 26-31). And, second, he sent messengers to the people of Jabesh-gilead concerning their rescuing of Saul's body from the Philistines (see above).

This period was a good preparation for the larger work that was to follow. Pro-

7. Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

5:1. THEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.

2. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

3. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

4. David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign; *and* he reigned forty years.

5. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

fessor Bryce, writing concerning the Constitution of the United States, says that all its best distinctive ideas were first tried and proved by individual states before they were incorporated into the national constitution.

Almost all the men of great power rose by degrees, from the lower to the higher, from the lesser to the greater. David had proved himself fitted for the kingship. He had almost ideal qualities for it. But he needed training by lesser and easier tasks for the great, enduring, glorious kingdom he was to create and rule. Hence, for seven years he was faithful over a few things in order that he might rule well over many things.

IV. **DAVID KING OF ISRAEL**, 2 Sam. 5. "The seven and a half years between Saul's death and the crowning of David as king of all Israel were a period of civil war between the tribes of the north and of the south. When Saul fell at Gilboa, his general, Abner, persuaded the northern tribes to make his only surviving son, Ish-bosheth, king in his father's place. Ish-bosheth was king in name only. Abner was the real ruler, and for some time kept the people united under his leadership. In the tribal warfare David's forces under the command of Joab were uniformly victorious over those of Abner. Abner quarrelled with Ish-bosheth and deserted to David, promising to bring the northern tribes with him. His murder, and the assassination of Ish-bosheth, left the north with no strong leader or heir to the throne of Israel and they turned to David as their natural king. David's broad spirit and the many evidences of his good will to the northern tribes now bore fruit."

1. **Then came all the tribes of Israel to David to Hebron.** They came by their elders (v. 3), representing, according to 1 Chron. 12:23-40, 339,600 warriors. They gave good reasons. (1) **Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh.** That is, they "were of such common descent that it was unfitting for them to constitute separate nations." — *Ellicott*. (2) He had shown himself a competent leader. His personal bravery and military skill had been proved. After his exploit with Goliath his name had become a household word. They had known of his many other exploits. (3) v. 2. **The Lord said unto thee, . . . thou shalt be a captain (R. V. "prince") over Israel.** He was divinely appointed, the one whom God saw to be the best one for their king. The man whom God chooses for an office is the man the people need.

David's was a constitutional monarchy, not a despotism. 3. **King David made a league with the elders of Israel in Hebron before the Lord.** This league was probably a solemn contract in which the king on the one hand engaged to rule according to the laws, and the people on the other hand promised him their allegiance. Some kind of a charter, defining the king's rights, was in existence (1 Sam. 10:25); and later on we find the people demanding some limitation of these rights (1 Kings 12:3 ff.).

The Coronation. This was accompanied by religious sanctions and services, king and people consecrating themselves to Jehovah as the true God, and promising to be loyal and true to him. According to 1 Chron. 12:39, 40, there was a three days' sacrificial feast, with ample provisions, figs, raisins, wine, and oils, beside sheep and oxen, brought by some of the nearer tribes, "for there was joy in Israel."

The New Capital, vs. 6-9. Hebron was the natural capital of Judah, but was not in a fitting situation to be the capital of all Israel, being too far south, and not sufficiently strong from a military point of view. Therefore **the king and his men went to Jerusalem**, then called Jebus, as its inhabitants were Jebusites (1 Chron. 11:4). Political, civil, and military considerations pointed to Jerusalem as the most suitable capital for the united kingdom. (1) Its position was just within the borders of Judah, but close to the border of the northern kingdom. (2) Its selection "would conciliate all parties, and be a bond of union, since it was the centre of the district within which had been wrought out the life and history of the twelve tribes. A circle of 30 miles' radius with Jerusalem for a centre embraced almost every enemy and almost every achievement in Hebrew history." — *James Simes*. (3) At the same time it continued David under the special protection of his own tribe. (4) "As a military post it was unrivalled. It stood on a rocky plateau surrounded on three sides by deep ravines, forming a natural fortress of almost impregnable strength." — *Cambridge Bible*. It was the Gibraltar of Palestine.

Twice only, so far as is known, in its history has the city been taken without the aid of treachery from within. The first was its capture by David's men. David had quietly noticed that there was one way of reaching the citadel where few defenders would be watching, since no one expected an attack in that direction. This was by the gutter, the watercourse. The brilliant exploit was accomplished by Joab, David's nephew, and he received the reward which had been offered, the confirmation of his position as commander-in-chief of Israel's army.

The second time was the capture by the British under General Allenby in the great World War. Because of its strength and its history it had been freely prophesied that the city would not be taken; at least not without the destruction of its walls and defenses by the best of modern cannon. For this reason its comparatively easy reduction is considered by many as a distinct intervention by God to prevent the ruin of the sacred sites it contains; and this without any underestimation of the skill and wisdom of the commanding general.

V. THE SECRET OF DAVID'S SUCCESS. David was chosen, not so much for the excellences of character he already possessed as for the *possibilities* of excellence to be developed by the grace of God, through his obedience. There were many ingredients in this secret.

1. His patience. He was willing to bide his time.
2. His brotherliness. He was eager to draw others into success with him.
3. His energy. He missed no opportunity through sluggishness or lack of preparation.
4. His courage. He was ready to meet any foe.
5. His trust. He had the confidence which is half of victory, and that comes only from faith in God.
6. His tact. He knew how to do and say the right things at the right times.
7. His loyalty to his friends. He proved that he could be trusted.
8. His patriotism. He loved his country, and was glad to live for it.
9. Above all things his religion. He learned to do right amid great temptations to wrong doing.

LESSON V (18). — August 1.

DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM. — 2 Sam. 6:1-19;
Ps. 24:7-10.

PRINT 2 Sam. 6:11-19; Ps. 24:7-10.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.* — Ps. 100:4.

Devotional Reading: 1 Chron. 16:23-31.

Additional Material for Teachers: Ex. 25:10-22; 2 Sam. 5:6-25; 1 Chron. 15 and 16; Heb. 9:2-10.

Primary Topic: THANKING GOD.

Lesson Material: 2 Sam. 6:11-19; Ps. 24:7-10.

Memory Verse: It is a good thing to give thanks unto Jehovah. Ps. 92:1.

Junior Topic : THE ARK OF GOD BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM.

Lesson Material : 2 Sam. 6 : 11-19 ; Ps. 24 : 7-10.

Memory Verses : Ps. 24 : 7-10.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : WHAT THE ARK MEANT TO ISRAEL.

Additional Material : Ex. 25 : 10-22 ; Heb. 9 : 2-10.

Topic for Young People and Adults : MAKING RELIGION CENTRAL.

Additional Material : Matt. 6 : 19-34 ; Luke 10 : 38-42 ; Phil. 3 : 12-16.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

David determined to make religion a real influence in the kingdom, for the ark represented the presence of Jehovah among his people. The history of the ark and its relation to the religious history of Israel forms the solid basis for the lesson, while its practical applications to modern conditions makes for a very practical subject.

Begin the lesson in the **Younger Grades** by drawing from them the things which we owe to God's love and care, — the list can be made very personal and as long as the time will permit. Then ask if we thank God every day for giving us all these good things. Show by the story how David thanked God for what God had done for him.

The **Junior** classes can add to this the story of the making of the ark, and its purpose ; while the **Intermediate and Senior** grades can make a study of the references to the ark in the Bible, to discover just how much the ark meant to Israel.

In the classes for **Young People and Adults** the main part of the time can be spent on the place of religion in the life. Can it be made a side issue, or should it be the central thing around which all other interests cluster? What is the place of religion in the nation? Can it safely be ignored as something pertaining to the individual alone?

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Most probably after the completion of David's wars, when the nation was at peace, and David could give his attention to the establishment of the national religion. Beecher thinks it was in B.C. 1042, in the twenty-second year of David's reign.

Place. — The ark had been for a long time at Kirjath-jearim, about eleven miles west of Jerusalem. In the first of our lesson it was moved from there to the house of Obed-edom at some point between Kirjath-jearim and Jerusalem ;

and in the latter part of our lesson it was brought to Jerusalem and placed in the place prepared for it, probably on Mount Zion.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles, and also on Psalm 24.

Lives of David, as named in previous lessons.

W. H. Bennett, *A Biblical Introduction. A Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles*, by Rev. W. D. Crockett; and Professor Little's *Royal Houses of Israel and Judah*. Kingsley's *Gospel of the Pentateuch and David*.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The ark of the covenant and its symbolism.
The ark as a means of religious life.
History of the ark to this time.
Value of religious enthusiasm.
Why was Uzzah so severely punished?
The harm that comes from irreverence.
The presence of God in a home.
Why did David want the ark in Jerusalem?

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : David's Work for the Religious Life of Israel.

- I. THE ARK OF THE COVENANT, Ex. 25 : 10-22.
- II. THE HISTORY OF THE ARK.
- III. THE ARK BROUGHT FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM, 2 Sam. 6 : 1-10.
- IV. THE ARK IN THE HOUSE OF OBED-EDOM, 2 Sam. 6 : 10-12.
- V. THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM, 2 Sam. 6 : 11-19 ; Ps. 24 : 7-10.
- VI. MAKING RELIGION CENTRAL.

THE LESSON IN ART.

The Return of the Ark, Doré.*
King David and the Ark, by an unknown artist.*
David Praising the Lord, by van Meire.

I. THE ARK OF THE COVENANT, Ex. 25:10-22. The ark was made during the year spent by the Israelites on their way from Egypt to their Promised Land. It was a chest of acacia wood, $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits (about 4 ft.) long, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits ($2\frac{1}{2}$ ft.) in height as well as width. Acacia wood was famed for its strength and durability,



Ark of the Covenant.

being hard and close-grained. It was overlaid, plated, both within and without with pure gold. The lid was of solid gold, and was called the mercy seat. Upon this lid were two golden figures of winged cherubim, with their wings stretched out over the ark, and their faces turned toward one another. These were symbols of the presence of Jehovah, who as King of Israel dwelt between the cherubim, uttered his voice from between them, and there met the High Priest, as the representative of the people, on the Day of Atonement.

There were golden rings at the four corners of the ark, and four staves of acacia wood overlaid with gold placed in the rings that the ark might be carried by them during the journey of the Israelites. It was placed in the Holy of Holies and contained, according to Heb. 9:4, the two tables containing the Ten Commandments, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded.

What the Ark Meant to Israel. "The ark was the most ancient and sacred of the religious symbols of the Hebrew nation." "It is mentioned close to 200 times." (1) It was the sign and expression of the divine presence in Israel. It was the abode of the deity, just as our churches are the places where we meet God. Neither now nor in olden time does this expression imply that God is not everywhere. But in some places God especially manifests himself, on account of the limitations of human nature. (2) The ark was the place where God revealed his will. The shekinah shone between the cherubim. (3) The tables of the law within the ark were the loving covenant of God with his people. They were to keep his law, and then they were to be his people, and especially under his protection. (4) The mercy seat over the ark revealed God as ready to forgive transgressions whenever there was repentance; that he was full of lovingkindness and tender forbearance. Hence the ark was the central point of religious worship and divine guidance.

II. THE HISTORY OF THE ARK. From the time of the making of the ark in the shadow of Mt. Sinai to the time, more than 400 years later, when David sought to bring it to his capital, Jerusalem, it had many strange and interesting experiences.

(1) It accompanied and guided the people throughout their wilderness journey.
(2) It went in advance of the people into the midst of Jordan, and stood there as a sign and seal of safety until all the people had passed over (Josh. 4:1-11).

(3) It was carried in the midst of the host in the solemn procession around Jericho, until that city fell (Josh. 6:1, 20).

(4) It formed the central place of worship for the tribes, first in Gilgal, and later at Shiloh, twenty miles north of Jerusalem (Josh. 18:1; 1 Sam. 1:3).

(5) When the Israelites were smitten in battle by the Philistines near Aphek they hoped to save the day by bringing the symbol of the worship of Jehovah into the midst of the battle. But God did not reward the wickedness of Eli's sons and the Israelites in that way. The Israelites were totally defeated, and the ark captured by the enemy. But the Lord would not permit them to retain it. Their idol Dagon fell before it. The people were smitten with sore sickness wherever the ark was sent. Finally it was returned to Israel, and sent up the Sorek valley as far as Kirjath-jearim, 9 or 10 miles from Jerusalem (*Eusebius*), where it remained for seventy years in the house of Abinadab on the hill who put it in charge of one of his sons (1 Sam. 7:1).

III. THE ARK BROUGHT FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM, 2 Sam. 6:1-10. David and his mighty men had as their first duty to conquer the enemies of Israel. As soon as the Philistines heard that David had become king of all Israel they immediately made an attack upon him and his kingdom in great force. Battle after battle had to be fought before the Israelites could feel themselves safe from the in-

cursions of this powerful people. Until that time came the people, at least, would not be ready to make an earnest effort to revive the religious life of the nation ; nor, probably, would such a religious procession as that which went to bring the ark to Jerusalem have been safe from attack from these hostile neighbors. "The ultimate recovery of the ark, we cannot doubt, stands in close connection with David's repeated victories over the Philistines. Only when their power had been completely broken was it possible for David to regain possession of the ark."—*New Century Bible*.

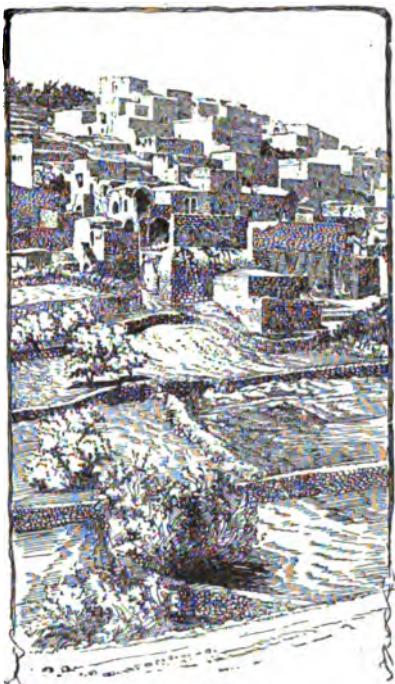
When therefore peace had finally been won David consulted with all his military leaders, and later with the whole assembly of the people, proposing that the ark should be brought to the capital (1 Chron. 13 : 1-4). And "the thing was right in the eyes of all the people."

1. **Thirty thousand**, representatives of the whole people, coming from all portions of the country. The restoration must be a national act, or it would lose much of its unifying power.

2. **Baale of Judah**, another name for Kirjath-jearim (1 Chron. 13 : 6).

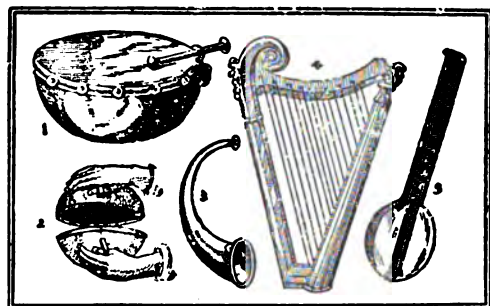
3. **They set the ark of God upon a new cart**. Here was the first error. It was probably done from a desire to keep the ark sacred from anything that had been used for common purposes ; or from a remembrance of the way it was brought from the Philistines to Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. 6 : 7). But that was by the Philistines who could not have known the law while David and the priests should have been familiar with it. See Num. 4 : 15 ; 7 : 9. The ark was to be carried by Levites.

5. **And David and all the house of Israel played**. The Hebrew word means to dance to music vocal and instrumental. (See Judges 16 : 25, and Jer. 30 : 19 ; 1 Chron. 13 : 8.) **On all manner of instruments made of fir wood**. "The expression is a strange one. Probably we should adopt



Kirjath-jearim.

Here the Ark remained for seventy years.



Musical Instruments.

1. Timbrel. 2. Cymbals. 3. Cornet. 4. Harp. 5. Psaltery.

place, probably not far from Jerusalem), the oxen shook it. The R. V. says "the oxen stumbled," giving the cause rather than the result. The ark was on the point

the reading of the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles, *with all their might and with singing*. The Hebrew words are very similar, and the Septuagint text supports the change."—*Cambridge Bible*. Harps, like our modern harp. Psalteries, probably resembling our guitar. Timbrels seem to have included tambourines and all instruments of the drum kind. Cornets, horns. Cymbals, like those in use to-day.

6. The second error of the day grew out of the first error. "The jagged bridlepaths of those parts are not at all adapted for wheeled conveyances," and when the procession had reached Nachon's

threshing floor (an unknown place, probably not far from Jerusalem), the oxen shook it. The R. V. says "the oxen stumbled," giving the cause rather than the result. The ark was on the point

Sam. 6:11. And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

of being thrown off the cart, and was liable to serious injury. To prevent this catastrophe Uzzah, one of the sons of Abinadab who was driving the cart (v. 3), took hold of it. . . . And God smote him . . . and there he died.

Why This Severity? (1) It was a direct and double disobedience. (2) Uzzah, who had long had charge of the ark, should have known the law concerning it. (3) What he did was public, in the sight of all the people. It was necessary at the outset to prove to the people the necessity of exact obedience to God's law, for one neglect leads surely to another.

8. David was displeased. With God? It does not say so. With the breaking up of his plans and the failure of his hopes. And most of all his conscience smote him that he had not taken pains to learn the right way to do a good thing.

IV. THE ARK IN THE HOUSE OF OBED-EDOM, 2 Sam. 6:10-12. David then decided not to continue the removal of the ark to Jerusalem. He was afraid lest some other mistake might be made, and he thought it best to first learn all about

his duty. Carried it aside to the house of Obed-edom. Probably one of the Levites of Gath-rimmon.

11. Three months. Long enough for Israel to learn their lesson. The Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household. This would show to all Israel that the ark itself brought blessing, not death. The death came from disobedience, not from the ark.

The Ark of God in the Home. Consider what religion does for the home; what it brings in, and what it keeps out. It brings God's blessing on all that we do or say; it prevents the expression of bad passions and actions which mar the happiness of home. Not only every individual, but every nation, is prospered and made powerful by true religion.

"Have you family worship in your dwelling? Try it, and you will find

that God will deal well with you through it, as of old he dealt with Obed-edom when the ark was in his house." — *W. M. Taylor.*



Return of the Ark.

"The house of Obed-edom
Where safe the ark abode,
What time were wars and fightings
On every mountain road,
What time was pitched the battle
In every valley fair,
The house of Obed-edom
Had peace beyond compare.

"The line of Obed-edom
Is on the earth to-day;
In the house of Obed-edom
Still he may safely stay
Who, dearer than all treasure
For which men toil and plod,
Shall prize the covenant blessing,
The hallowed ark of God.

"And never strife nor clamor
Shall break the tranquil spell
In which our Lord's beloved
Forever safely dwell.
In the house of Obed-edom,
In sunlight or in dark,
Abides the ceaseless blessing
That rests within the ark." — *Margaret E. Sangster.*

V. THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM, 2 Sam. 6:11-19; Ps. 24:7-10. And it was told king David, etc. The fact that God blessed the place where the ark was impressed David with the truth that, while it was dangerous to disobey God, yet it was the greatest blessing possible to have near him the ark of God and his manifest presence. So David went and brought up the ark of God, assembling the

12. And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

13. And it was so, that, when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

14. And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.

15. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16. And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

17. And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

18. And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

19. And he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of *flesh*, and a flagon of *wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house.

Ps. 24: 7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

tribes once more, the most eminent priests, the flower of the army, the princes and dignitaries.

Most probably the general arrangements for the procession, the music, and the dancing before the ark were practically the same as those made for the first attempt to remove the ark. In one most important matter, however, the change was great: **The children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord (1 Chron. 15:15).**

Into the city of David with gladness. A fuller description of this festival procession is given in 1 Chronicles 15 and 16. "Every care was now taken to carry out to the letter all that had been ordered with regard to the removal of the ark. It was done in a splendid manner, and with stately music, and with the proper ordering of the priests and the Levites. The king himself was dressed in a linen ephod, and with a harp in his hands, and with singing and with sacred dancing he led the procession. As they drew near Mt. Zion the women of the city came out to welcome them. Trumpets pealed, there were shouts as of a victorious army, and now all felt that the wanderings of the ark had ended even as the wanderings of the king had on this day of triumph." — *W. J. Knox Little in Temple Series of Bible Characters: David.*

The Marching Choruses. One psalm written for this occasion is given in 1 Chron. 16: 8-36. But especially the 24th Psalm is supposed to have been sung as they wound up the hill and entered Jerusalem, where David had prepared a tabernacle for the ark. "Seven choirs of singers and musicians, so Josephus tells us, preceded the ark on this occasion," says Perowne, who supposes the psalm to have been sung antiphonally in this way.

The whole congregation as they wind up the hill, —

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods."

One choir, or a single voice, —

"Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
Or who shall stand in his holy place?"

8. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory. Selah.

Answered by another choir or voice, —

"He that hath clean hands and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood, nor sworn deceitfully."

Both choirs, —

"He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation."

"This is the generation that seek after him,
That seek thy face, even Jacob."

(*Selah*, an interlude, when only the orchestra is heard. Then a band of priests and Levites, heading the procession, pass through the gates.)

The vast assembly without, —

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
And the King of glory shall come in."

The company within, —

"Who is the King of glory?" (*Who thus demands admittance?*)

The assembly without reply, —

"Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.

Jehovah of hosts,
He is the King of glory."

The ark was then put into its tent; the people feasted and returned home with great joy.

The King of Glory. This Psalm is most often associated in our minds with Christ's resurrection.

"And did he rise?
Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!
He rose! He rose! He burst the bars of death.
Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the King of glory to come in.
Who is the King of glory? He who left
His throne of glory for the paths of death.

"Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the King of glory to come in.
Who is the King of glory? He who slew
The ravenous foe who gorged all human race.
The King of glory, he whose glory filled
Heaven with amazement at his love to man,
And with divine complacency beheld
Powers most illumined 'wilderer in the theme.'"
— Edward Young.

What More Did David Do for the Religious Life of Israel? It was the desire of his heart to build a glorious temple for the ark of God, but the privilege was refused to him (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17). It was told him, however, that his son should accomplish what he himself had wished to do. The work of David, therefore, in this connection, was the accumulation of vast treasure to be used in the building (1 Chron. 18:7-11; 22; 28); and the establishment of the regular "courses" of the priests, and of choirs of Levites, etc., for the worship in the temple, when it was built (1 Chron. 24-26). As a great poet himself he composed a great number of psalms which were intended to be used in the service, and in fact were so used. And he gave the weight of his influence to aid the building, by telling the leaders of Israel of his wish, and God's answer; and enlisting in the matter not only their interest, but their gifts.

VI. MAKING RELIGION CENTRAL. The ark was the centre of the religion of Israel; they had not progressed far enough toward a spiritual worship to render some visible sign unnecessary to a full degree of religious activities. The neglect of the ark brought irreligion in its train. So long as it was kept near the border of the land, where the proximity to their enemies made it dangerous to visit frequently, it was naturally neglected. And the fact of its being so hidden away seems to have

taken from the blessing which it might bring. We hear of no such blessing to the household of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearim as came to the house of Obed-edom. The very fact of the neglect of Uzzah, and most probably of the others also, to learn the law about the treatment of the ark indicates some difference in the spirit with which the ark was regarded in the two homes. It was in the house of Abinadab seventy years, and we do not read of any particular benediction falling on that house; it was in the house of Obed-edom three months, and the blessing made itself known throughout Palestine.

In New England colonial days the church was the centre of the life of the town. Some, at least, of the early charters make as one of the chief conditions of incorporation of a town that a "meeting-house" be erected there within a certain specified time, and regular worship instituted. In some villages to-day the same is true. Other places are of quite a different sort, — the saloon, perhaps, is the central gathering place; the gambling den; the dance hall; the cheap hotel. Contrast the character of the entire town in the two cases. The establishment of religion as the central point in the place where you are to live is the surest way to maintain morality, order, and prosperity for the people.

"There is no failure more heart-breaking and disastrous than success which leaves God out of the bargain. . . . If you are simply setting out in life to amass mere material success, fame created or position gained, then success will be the most dismal and disastrous failure." — *G. Campbell Morgan*.

"What Makes a Nation Great?"

"Not serried ranks with flags unfurled,
Not armored ships that gird the world,
Not hoarded wealth nor busy mills,
Not cattle on a thousand hills,
Not sages wise, nor schools, nor laws,
Not boasted deeds in freedom's cause —
All these may be, and yet the state
In the eye of God be far from great.

The land is great which knows the Lord,
Where songs are guided by his word,
Where justice rules 'twixt man and man,
Where love controls in act and plan,
Where breathing in his native air
Each soul finds joy in praise and prayer.
Thus may our country, good and great
Be God's delight — man's best estate.

— *Alexander Blackburn*.

LESSON VI (19). — August 8.

THE KINGLY KINDNESS OF DAVID. — 2 Sam. 8:15; 9:1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people.*
— 2 SAM. 8:15.

Devotional Reading : Col. 3:12-17.

Additional Material for Teachers : Deut. 28:1-14; Psalm 79:70-72.

Primary Topic : DAVID KIND TO A CRIPPLE.

Lesson Material : 2 Sam. 9:1-13.

Memory Verse : Through love be servants one to another. Gal. 5:13.

Junior Topic : DAVID'S KINDNESS TO JONATHAN'S SON.

Lesson Material : 2 Sam. 9:1-13.

Memory Verse : Matt. 25:40.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : DAVID SHOWING HIMSELF KINGLY.

Topic for Young People and Adults : ELEMENTS OF STRENGTH IN DAVID'S CHARACTER.

Additional Material : 1 Sam. 24:1-7; 2 Sam. 1:17-27; 7:1, 2.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

President Wilson once said: "He alone can rule his own spirit, who puts himself under the command of the Spirit of God."

Interest will be found in developing

the difference between the usual methods taken by a new king toward other possible heirs of the throne, and that taken by David. One proof of his strength of character can also be found in his application of the proverb: "Greater is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

In the Younger Grades the story can be told in such a way as to bring out the fact that just as soon as David was truly prosperous he began to look around for some one to be kind to ; and the application to their own lives of being ready and quick to share their happiness with another.

The Intermediate and Senior classes will add to this a study of the kingly qualities of such kindness as David showed. Show how kindness to all, especially to those in trouble, has made many a king more beloved, and strengthened his throne, even while those who treat their subjects without kindness are passing into the discard.

The Young People and Adults can begin to-day a searching analysis of David's character, discussing to-day only his strong points, and the good qualities he showed in his career.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Not far from the middle of David's reign, about the time of the close of his wars. According to Prof. Willis R. Beecher in his *Dated Events of the Old Testament*, "it was subsequent to David's great sin, and was probably one of the earliest fruits of his repentance."

Place. — David was at Jerusalem. Mephibosheth lived near Mahanaim, east of the Jordan, about halfway between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Tell the story of Mephibosheth up to this time.
Why did David summon him to his court?
What was the ordinary method of treating possible heirs to the throne?
What advantages would come from his presence at David's court?
How did David show himself kingly in this act?
Ziba and his later relations with Mephibosheth.
What were the elements of strength in David's character?

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on 2 Samuel, and *Lives of David* mentioned in previous lessons.

Representative Men of the Bible,

Mephibosheth, by Dr. George Matheson.

Dean George Hodges' *The Heresy of Cain*, — which heresy is the denial that we are our brothers' keepers. *The Social Influence of Christianity*, by David J. Hill, LL.D.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Kingly Kindness of David.

- I. THE CONDITION OF DAVID'S KINGDOM.
- II. THE STORY OF MEPHIBOSHETH, 2 Sam. 4:4.
- III. DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH, 2 Sam. 9:1-13.
- IV. THE VALUE OF KINDNESS.
- V. ELEMENTS OF STRENGTH IN DAVID'S CHARACTER.

I. THE CONDITION OF DAVID'S KINGDOM. The first part of the reign of David was filled with wars against the Philistines and the other surrounding nations. As we have seen, the Philistines left him alone when they thought him merely king of Hebron, but launched a great attack against him when he assumed the throne of all Israel. Other neighbors either attacked him, or showed their willingness to do so. The long wars with the Philistines, and the civil war of more than seven years, had totally disorganized the kingdom, in both its government and its religion. David did not war for conquest, but for peace ; but he was essentially "a man of war" from the necessities of the case.

At the time of our lesson the kingdom was fairly launched, with favoring wind and tide, to move on to its fulness of usefulness and glory. Its enemies were subdued, its borders widely extended, its people prosperous and united, its commerce extended — although the Jews were never a commercial people — the sacred ark was on Mount Zion, religious services were organized. David was living in a splendid palace made of cedar, the finest wood from the noblest tree of the country.

He had found the kingdom a chaos, and had made it an orderly, well-arranged government. He had found it small, and had made it large. He had found it divided, and had made it a unity. He had found it sorely pressed by enemies, and he had made it victorious over them. He had found religion at a low ebb, and had brought it to a full, flowing tide.

He had organized the army, with 600 heroes at its head, and with at least 300,000 men in 12 brigades.

The organization of the government was well constructed. It is probable that the local governments remained as they were in the time of the Judges ; but

2 Sam. 8:15. And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

2 Sam. 9:1. AND David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

2. And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name *was* Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art thou* Ziba? And he said, Thy servant *is he*.

David was at the head, with the wisest men for counsellors, such as Ahithophel and Hushai.

II. THE STORY OF MEPHIBOSHETH, 2 Sam. 4:4. His story opens amid the storm and stress of Israel, at the time of the great battle of Gilboa, where the Philistines slew Saul and his sons, and scattered Israel to the four winds. His name was originally Meri-baal, "Lord Meri," and he was only 5 years old when his father Jonathan and his grandfather Saul were slain. When the news reached Jonathan's home, most probably by a breathless messenger from the battlefield, the boy's nurse caught up the child to flee from the approaching danger. But in her frantic terror she carelessly let him fall. He was picked up a hopeless cripple, for all his life lame in both feet. "It shut the gates of an earthly paradise to him for life."

The difficulty with this prince was not so much in his outward misfortunes as in the weakness of his spirit. History is full of examples of men who have overcome the greatest of obstacles in their path: Galileo in prison, working on his astronomical problems in the one ray of light that entered his dungeon; Kitto and Beethoven, the deaf; Milton and Fawcett, the blind. So it has ever been; the school of adversity has more noble graduates than any university in the world.

III. DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH, 2 Sam. 9:1-13. In the pause that came to David at this time his mind reverts to forgotten duties, overlooked in the great pressure of the duties of defending and organizing his kingdom, and building up his people into material and religious prosperity. He remembers his league with Jonathan, which was to extend to their children. He made inquiries at once for any surviving relatives of Saul. Ziba, an officer of the house of Saul, reported to David that a son of Jonathan was living in the home of Machir in Lodebar, a place not far from Mahanaim.

Being 5 years old at the time of his father's death, he must have been 12 or 13 when David became king over all Israel, and surely over 30 at the time of our lesson. He was married, and had a young son (v. 12).

All the affection which Jonathan had lavished upon David now came back in full tide to prompt him to express his appreciation of it by kind deeds to his son. He had also loved Saul himself, much as he had suffered from him.

David at once sent officers to bring him from Mahanaim to Jerusalem, where his personal inheritance from Saul was restored to him. It must have been considerable, and was placed under the care of Ziba as steward, and the revenues were ordered to be sent to Mephibosheth at the court of David. Mephibosheth was invited to sit at the royal table as a part of David's household. The Syrian missionary, Rev. William Ewing, wrote, "When two men eat bread together, this is the desert sacrament, the sign and seal of a covenant of friendship, a league for mutual protection. This is so if they eat but once. Had David only on one occasion invited Mephibosheth to sit and eat with him, he would therefore have been known as the king's friend, to injure whom would be to provoke the monarch's vengeance. But a place 'continually' at the royal table declared a relationship of a deeper and stronger kind. He who eats 'continually'



From an old print.

David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son.

3. And the king said, *Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him?* And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, *which is lame on his feet.*

4. And the king said unto him, *Where is he?* And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, *he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.*

5. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth! And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7. And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8. And he bowed himself, and said, *What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?*

9. Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

10. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth.

13. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

at an Arab's board has passed the conditions of mere 'guest' or 'friend' and is acknowledged as identified with the family, in all its manifold interests."

How Did David Show Himself Kingly in This Action? 1. It showed his security in his kingdom. The Oriental idea was that all the family of a rival claimant to the throne should be put to death, or removed from all possibility of inciting an insurrection, an idea we have seen illustrated in the Turkish Empire in modern times. Mephibosheth, as the representative of the eldest son of Saul, had precedence over the other grandsons of Saul, and was the heir to his throne, if family inheritance was to be considered. Notwithstanding his lameness, if he had been a man of strong character and determination, he might win to his side enough of the discontented in David's kingdom to make him a thorn in David's side, if not actually a menace to him. Again, if some strong leader should be affronted by David to the point of rebellion, here was a rallying point to which he could call other malcontents. But David showed no apprehension of danger from him.

2. It showed his kingly control over his own spirit. Saul had many times tried to kill David, he had driven him into exile, and hunted him from place to place. There was a long black chapter of wrongs in the past. Some might have sought to have revenged themselves on the descendants of their enemy. Not so David. He lived up to the precepts in Proverbs 25: 21, 22 and Rom. 12: 19-21, — "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Later David delivered seven sons and grandsons of Saul to their enemies, still sparing Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 21: 1-9). This was not, however, to avenge his own wrongs, but to avenge those of others; nor had it any relation to the security of his throne.

3. It showed his kingly charity. Dr. George Matheson writes, "I have found a portrait which expresses a phase of human nature not expressed in all the previous

survey. It is the nourishing of a deformed man by the high places of the earth ; it is the world's first respectful recognition of the claims of human decrepitude.

" If he had been an Epictetus — a poor body with a rich soul — we might have said that he was accepted *in spite of* his deformity. But when we see a *commonplace* object of decrepitude loaded with the gifts of charity, when we see an Epictetus *without genius*, or a Talleyrand *without sagacity*, we know that the calamity itself has been the cause of the benevolence. . . .

" David says, I will provide for this man. I will make him glad. I will in his case disprove the doctrine that the physically unfavored are socially ostracized. He bids the wondering courtiers bring forth for him the fairest robe. Henceforth the man shall sit at the royal table, be an inmate of the royal household. He shall be adopted into the family of David. His shall be no servant's place. He shall get back his hereditary rights, the lands of Saul, the lands of Jonathan.

" You will see that this is very high charity on the part of David. When David set Mephibosheth at his own table he did more than confer benefit on a man physically afflicted ; he crowned the physical affliction. He took up the deformity to the Mount and transfigured it. He associated the broken box with fragrance."

IV. THE VALUE OF KINDNESS. " We have all been amused by the fable of the Sun and the Wind, and readily acknowledge the truth it inculcates, at least in that instance. But do we practise what it teaches ? We may almost daily. The true way of conquering our neighbor is not by violence but by kindness. O that people would set about striving to conquer one another in this way ! Then would a conqueror be truly the most glorious, and the most blessed, because the most beneficent of mankind. . . .

" In the intercourse of social life it is by little acts of watchful kindness, recurring daily and hourly, — and opportunities of doing kindnesses, if sought for, are for ever starting up, — it is by words, by tones, by gestures, by looks, that affection is won and preserved. He who neglects these trifles, yet boasts that, whenever a great sacrifice is called for, he shall be ready to make it, will rarely be loved. The likelihood is, he will not make it; and if he does, it will be much rather for his own sake, than for his neighbor's. . . .

" We seldom do a kindness, which, if we consider it rightly, is not abundantly repaid ; and we should hear little of ingratitude, unless we were so apt to exaggerate the worth of our better deeds, and to look for a return in proportion to our own exorbitant estimate." — *Hare's Guesses at Truth*.

" *The Man with a Genius for Helping*. ' There is a man,' said his neighbor, speaking of the village carpenter, ' who has done more good, I really believe, in this community, than any other person who ever lived in it. He cannot talk very well in a prayer meeting, and he doesn't often try. He isn't worth two thousand dollars, and it's very little he can put down on subscription papers for any object. But a new family never moves into the village that he does not find them out, to give them a neighborly welcome, and to offer any little service he can render. He is always on the lookout to give strangers a seat in his pew at church. He is always ready to watch with a sick neighbor, and look after his affairs for him. I have sometimes thought that he and his wife kept house-plants in winter just to be able to send flowers to invalids. He finds time for a pleasant word for every child he meets ; and you'll see the children climbing into his one-horse wagon when he has no other load. He really seems to have a genius for helping folks in all sorts of common ways, and it does me good every day just to meet him in the street.' " — *Rev. J. R. Miller*.

The Beauty of Service. " I read a story once told by H. S. Toomer which I would like to tell you because of the fine ending it has. It was about a girl called Flora, who was so poor-looking that she had come to be known by the other children as ' The Ugly Duckling.' "

" ' Oh, how I wish I was beautiful,' she cried one day, ' it is so dreadful to be ugly.' "

" ' You can be beautiful,' said the Queen of the Fairies. ' I will help you if you wish.' "

" The girl was carried off to the fairies' home. There she was set to waiting on an old, sick, rheumatic woman.

" At first she rebelled, but soon pitied the sick woman, and forgot her own troubles thinking how she might be of help.

" She made her a soft cushion. The old lady held a mirror, saying, ' Look, my child! ' "

"Flora was astonished. Her crooked eye was straight.
 "She wheeled her mistress out into the sunshine.
 "The mirror showed a new pretty curve in her mouth.
 "She rubbed the rheumatic limbs.
 "The mirror showed beautiful dimples in her cheek.
 "'You may go home now, you are beautiful,' and the old sick woman returned to her fairy form.
 "'I have kept my promise, you see,' said the fairy. 'See thou lose not that which thou hast gained. Farewell.'
 "'Oh, stop,' cried Flora, 'the poor old woman, who will take care of her?'
 "'I was that poor old woman.'
 "'But she was all crippled with pain.'
 "'Yes, I bore all that pain that you might grow beautiful.'
 "That is the beauty of all service rendered with love for others; it makes us nobler, finer, sweeter, prettier in face, in heart, and in life. Try it, young folk." —
Rev. James Learmount in an English paper.

My Prayer.

"I do not ask, my God, for mystic power
 To heal the sick and lame, the deaf and blind;
 I ask Thee humbly for the gracious dower
 Just to be kind.

"I do not pray to see the shining beauty
 Of highest knowledge most divinely true;
 I pray that, knowing well my duty,
 This I may do.

"I do not ask that men with flattering finger
 Should point me out within the crowded mart.
 But only that the thought of me may linger
 In one glad heart.

"I would not rise upon the men below me,
 Or pulling at the robes of men above;
 I would that friends, a few dear friends, may know me,
 And, knowing, love.

"I do not pray for palaces of splendor
 Or far amid the world's delights to roam;
 I pray that I may know the meaning tender
 Of home, sweet home.

"I do not ask that heaven's golden treasure
 Upon my little blundering life be spent;
 But oh, I ask Thee for the perfect pleasure
 Of calm content."

— *Amos R. Wells.*

V. WHAT WERE THE ELEMENTS OF STRENGTH IN DAVID'S LIFE ?

1. He relied on God. We saw this in his youth, when he tells Saul, "the Lord . . . will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Again where he calls in the fashion of the times to Goliath as they approach for combat, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts. . . . This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand."

During his exile life, and after he became king, we read often of his inquiring of the Lord when about to undertake any great thing, or when in any perplexity or danger.

2. He was greatly merciful. We see this fact throughout all his career. We see him sparing Saul twice at least when Saul was entirely in his power, and David's men were urging him to slay him and be safe. See Lesson III. That mercy is also shown in his attitude to Saul's family.

3. He greatly loved. His love for Jonathan was as great as Jonathan's for him. He even loved Saul, who hated him. For the sake of this love, and because it was right, he lived for years in exile, when he might have headed a successful rebellion and taken the throne. For the sake of this love he showed mercy on the son of Jonathan, and more than mercy, even love itself.

4. He was deeply religious. He brought the ark from its hidden resting place and made it the centre of the worship at the capital. He wanted to make for God a temple which should better compare with the house he had built for himself; and when his request to do this was refused he spent time and effort to do what he could toward the accomplishment of his wish. His Psalms breathe such an atmosphere of deep religious love, and faith, and trust, that there has never been any poetry to surpass them as expressions of Christian love and faith.

Even his sin, since it was greatly repented of, has served to make him, through the Psalms of penitence which have come down to us, a help rather than a hindrance to the religious life of the world.

There are other elements which can be found by a careful study of the life of David, for which we cannot find room in this book. His life will well repay close study in this direction; for we can all have the strength of character possessed by David, even in our more humble places. The very humanness of David renders him helpful to the modern man. He greatly sinned, as we shall see; but he greatly repented, and was greatly forgiven.

LESSON VII (20). — August 15.

THE SINS AND SORROWS OF DAVID. — 2 Sam. 12:9, 10;
18:1-15.GOLDEN TEXT. — *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.* — GAL. 6:7.

Devotional Reading : Prov. 1 : 7-16.

Additional Material for Teachers : 2 Sam. 11-20.

Primary Topic : DAVID'S GRIEF OVER ABSALOM.

Lesson Material : 2 Sam. 15 : 1-14 ; 18 : 5-15, 31-33.

Memory Verse : A wise son maketh a glad father. Prov. 15 : 20.

Junior Topic : DAVID AND ABSALOM.

Lesson Material : 2 Sam. 15 : 1-14 ; 18 : 5-15, 31, 33.

Memory Verse : Prov. 13 : 15 (The way, etc.).

Intermediate and Senior Topic : ABSALOM'S SELFISH LIFE AND HOW IT ENDED.

Topic for Young People and Adults : ELEMENTS OF WEAKNESS IN DAVID'S CHARACTER.

Additional Material : 2 Sam. 12 : 1-14.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

This lesson covers the great tragedy of David's life, a tragedy which came, at least in part, for his yielding to temptation. Absalom was a warning. His whole life said "Do not do as I did ; do not become what I became ; do not grow into my character ; do not enter the path which led to my ruin."

The history of Absalom, showing his character, his beauty, his popularity on the one side and his utter selfishness on the other, should be the basis of the study of all grades. Show the grief of the father and compare it with the grief of our own parents, when we do wrong, leading the pupils to realize the warning of Absalom's life, to hate the evil, to see where it is around us, and to do something to overcome it.

The Older Classes can well discuss the effect of selfishness on our own characters and on those around us, and how David's troubles were consequences of his own sin.

The Young People and Adults may finish the study of David which they began last Sunday, laying emphasis on the weak points in his character and how they affected his life and the fate of the nation. Little attention to his sin itself is necessary, looking at it only from the standpoint of the times in which he lived. Do not, however, belittle it or disregard its effects.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The lesson includes parts of the latter half of David's reign, — B.C. 1043-1023 according to Professor Beecher.

Place. — Various places throughout the kingdom and its environs.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The sin of David in the light of Oriental life at that time.

Absalom, his early life and training, and the effect on his character.

His exile and its cause.

Absalom as an unscrupulous politician.

Absalom's open rebellion.

Why did David not defend himself in Jerusalem?

David's grief for his son ; why so great?

How far were these troubles the fruit of David's sin?

The contrast between Absalom's sin and David's.

The contrast between the consequences.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Tragedy of the Wayward Son.

- I. THE DOUBLE SIN OF DAVID, 2 Sam. 11, 12.
- II. THE YOUTH OF ABSALOM, 2 Sam. 13, 14.
- III. ABSALOM THE REBEL, 2 Sam. 15-17.
- IV. THE DECISIVE BATTLE, 2 Sam. 18 : 1-18.
- V. THE TRAGEDY OF GRIEF, 2 Sam. 18 : 19-20 : 22.
- VI. ELEMENTS OF WEAKNESS IN DAVID'S CHARACTER.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

In addition to the various *Commentaries*, Stanley's *Jewish Church* is very graphic. Wade, *Old Testament History*, pp. 262-266, discusses carefully the motives for discontent that favored the

rebellion. George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography*, p. 335, has an interesting note on the race and on the place of the battle.

William M. Taylor's *David* is full and good. Alexander Whyte's *Bible Characters*, "Absalom," is brilliant, but too hard on David. Gallaher's *Pilgrimage of Adam and David* gives to the story a lifelike vividness. (This, as well as some of the other books, may only be found in second-hand book stores, or in some libraries.)

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Shakespeare's *King Lear*, on ingratitude to a parent. Dryden made use of the events of this period as the basis of his political poem on the court of Charles II., entitled *Absalom and Achitophel*.

Mrs. Sigourney's poem, "Tomb of Absalom." Longfellow's *Poems*, "The Chamber Over the Gate," on David's mourning for Absalom. N. P. Willis's *Poems*, "Absalom."

2 Sam. 12:9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

I. THE DOUBLE SIN OF DAVID, 2 Sam. 11, 12. (It is not necessary to spend any great amount of time here on this topic. It will be briefly considered again in the following lesson.) "These verses record the dark tragedy which cast a shadow



From an old print.
David's Sorrow.

over David's life when he was at the height of his power in the kingdom. No longer going out to battle with his army he remained at Jerusalem and came more and more under the demoralizing influence of his harem. The story of his temptation, and the deliberate murder of Uriah in his effort to cover his sin and gain the end he sought reveals the low moral depths to which he had fallen. In doing as he did he was acting in accordance with the common practice of kings of his time, but not according to the light he had received. He knew he was doing wrong and when the prophet Nathan appeared before him with his message of judgment, he broke down completely, acknowledging his sin and the justice of the judgment upon him."

II. THE YOUTH OF ABSALOM, 2 Sam. 13, 14. "Absalom was the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, the king of Geshur. He was born soon after David became king over all Israel. He was renowned for the beauty of his personal appearance (2 Sam. 14:25, 26) and for his marvellous head of hair. He must have been exceedingly attractive, with a jolly, reckless good-nature, but vain, crafty, and ambitious."

Influences under which He Grew up to Manhood. (1) His mother was the daughter of a heathen king, and without doubt she brought many heathen influences with her. (2) He grew up under the evil influences of polygamy. "All round David's palace courts were the separate dwellings of his wives, each woman bringing up her own family; the children as they grew up to manhood or womanhood scarcely knowing whether to regard each other as brethren or as strangers." The whole

atmosphere was impure and sensual. A young prince, amid court flatterers and self-indulgence, was in great moral danger. (3) During his early life David was so busy conquering his enemies, and organizing and developing his kingdom that he could give but small attention to the training of his growing family. (4) "Just as he was reaching the susceptible, perilous years of dawning manhood the dreadful example of his father's sin was set before him, and we can well imagine how the scandal of the court defiled his young imaginations."

(5) On the other hand, the boys knew their father's noble character, his bitter repentance, his love for his children. The greatest part by far of his father's life and example was on the side of virtue, courage, religion, and patriotism.

His Exile. Absalom killed his older half-brother Amnon for his crime against his sister Tamar, and fled to his maternal grandfather at Geshur. David mourned for his beautiful but wayward boy. After three years of exile Joab, David's general, perceiving this, sent a woman to the king with a fictitious but ingenious story, which showed David his conduct as in a mirror. He restored Absalom to Jerusalem, but for two years more he refused to see his son.

III. ABSALOM THE REBEL, 2 Sam. 15-17. No one can reach the heart of this tragedy unless he reads carefully, more than once, the four chapters (15-18) which tell the whole story with dramatic interest and power. It is very modern at heart; and if we strip off the orientalisms of the picture, it will read like a condensed modern novel or drama.

The wayward son.

The unscrupulous politician.

The two shrewd counsellors.

The suicide.

The aged father's love.

The two boy scouts.

The discredited king.

The bloody battle.

The tragic death of the son.

The bitter grief of the father.

The Motives. David's treatment of his son "was neither right nor politic. It was not right; for, on the one hand, if Absalom had committed a crime, he ought to have been punished for it; and on the other, if there was ground for his recall from banishment, there was also ground for receiving him at court. It was not politic; for it could not but put Absalom into a position of antagonism to his father, and the fretting impatience of these two years was but the bitter bud out of which at length ripened rebellion." — *W. M. Taylor.*

David was drawing near the end of life, and Absalom would try not so much to take his father's kingdom from him, as to ensure that he himself should be the successor. "Under divine counsel, arrangements were already in progress for the succession of his brother Solomon." — *W. J. Beecher.* Morally and religiously there was a strong antagonism between father and son. Absalom, the restless, active young man, ambitious and unscrupulous, determined to take possession of the kingdom before it was too late.

Conditions Favorable to a Change of Government. 1. It was a time of general peace throughout the wide empire. For all restless, warlike spirits an opportunity was given for internal dissension, fault-finding, and opposition.

2. There was doubtless no little moral restraint upon corrupt practices and loose morals, against which a large number of the people rebelled, just as it is now in our large cities which try to enforce strict moral laws without requiring any personal reformation.

3. There was a growing dissatisfaction with the king. The business of the law courts, over which the king himself presided, had become too vast to be attended to by any one man. Appeals from inferior judges and cases brought directly to the king could not all receive a fair hearing.

4. David was very busy preparing materials and gathering money for a future temple. Nothing was visibly accomplished, yet the taxes were high. Some would consider David "an old hypocrite," and ridicule him for it.

5. David would at his age necessarily be less active, less in the people's eye, doing less for the outward glory of the kingdom. It has been supposed by some that he was suffering from severe and repulsive illness, depressed in body and spirit (see Ps. 41:8; 38:1-10).

6. It is possible that the events of 2 Sam. 24 took place before this time. The enrolment would be unpopular, for it looked toward more taxes. The plague that followed would intensify the discontent.

The Unscrupulous Politician. Absalom did not plunge at once into open rebellion. He began by assuming a semi-regal magnificence to assert his rank as heir-apparent. Riding by in his royal chariot, with 50 men running before him, he made a great impression on the people. His youth and beauty and courtesy made him seem "every inch a king." And as the people saw him they would say, "That is something like a king; but as for David, we might as well have no court, for anything we see of him." — *W. M. Taylor.*

The dignity thus assumed rendered the more persuasive the blandishments by which he strove to seduce from their allegiance the suitors who repaired from all parts of the land to Jerusalem.

Every morning Absalom rose up early, and was ready by the gate to meet any one that had a controversy, or better "suit" as in R. V. He did not wait to give the king time to attend to his case.

Absalom, greeting the suitor, "Of what city art thou?" (Showing interest in him personally.)

The Suitor, From such and such a place (in one of the tribes of Israel).

A statement of the trouble followed.

Absalom. "See, thy matters are good and right. You should win your case. But there is no official appointed to hear it. The King has neglected to provide for his people. Oh that I were judge in the land, then would I do justice to you all!"

"And Absalom put forth his hand, and kissed him"; feigning humility and condescension as well as the desire for justice. This was *before* election! He was an unscrupulous politician. The only way to judge such is to see what they do *after* election.

The Open Rebellion, 15:7-12. When Absalom felt that the time was ripe, and he had stolen the hearts of the people from David, he proceeded to carry out his more open plans. Verse 7 says "after forty years." It is not likely that he held his hand and continued this plotting for this length of time. Some think the time is counted from the beginning of David's reign; but most regard it as a transcriber's error for four, a mistake very easily made when numbers were designated by letters often very similar, and the MSS. copied by hand. It is probable that it means that there was four years of this plotting.

Absalom asked the king for permission to go to Hebron to offer a sacrifice which he said he had vowed while at Geshur. This was the home of his boyhood, and the former capital. It was then a good place for rallying those discontented with David's reign.

He made four especial preparations for the revolt. *First* he sent secret emissaries even before he left for Hebron, to prepare all the disaffected ones for it. He could easily secure leaders in every place by promises of office or gifts to them when he became king.

Second, he so planned it that the first news that the people would have of the rebellion would be that it was an accomplished fact. Of course this impression that it was already a success would tend in the highest degree to make it so.

Third, he invited to the sacrificial feast, as his guests, two hundred men of distinction who knew absolutely nothing of the plan. "No doubt Absalom hoped that many of them, finding themselves thus compromised, and seeing the number of his supporters, would decide to join him; or, failing this, they might be held as hostages."

— *Cambridge Bible.*

Fourth, he sent for David's wisest counsellor, a man of marvellous sagacity (2 Sam. 16:23). Absalom doubtless knew that he was disaffected with David; perhaps from the dishonor done to Bathsheba, his granddaughter, perhaps from his perception of the growing discontent among the people. "Aithophel's name was in itself almost a guarantee of Absalom's success."

Absalom the King. At once after proclaiming himself king in Hebron Absalom started on his march to Jerusalem, gathering recruits rapidly as he went. As soon as David learned of it he proposed and prepared to flee from Jerusalem and leave the city and the kingdom to his son. With 600 soldiers of the regular army, and a number of people who sympathized with David, he went as far as the plain of Jordan, where they encamped for the night, awaiting news from the city of Absalom's plans.

Absalom reigned three months, and during that time not one good thing is re-

2 Sam. 18:1. AND David numbered the people that *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

2. And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

3. But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thousand of us: therefore now *it is* better that thou succour us out of the city.

4. And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

5. And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6. So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

7. Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand *men*.

corded concerning him. He was as great a failure as a king as he was as a man, and for the same reason, — he was selfish. He wanted to be king for his own pleasure. He had no kingly aims or ideals.

A man selfish in his inmost soul can never attain true success. Selfishness ruins health, ruins conscience, ruins judgment. Selfishness fights against the selfish man himself.

Why Did David Flee instead of Defending Himself? 1. He was unwilling to have a civil war, with all the horrors of a siege.

2. He loved his son so much that he could not, in his condition, weakened by age, make war with him.

3: The outbreak was sudden; David was unprepared; it was impossible for him to know whom to trust, or how wide the disaffection extended. "Politically considered, David's action was the wisest that could be taken." — *Tuck*.

4. "Possibly, too, the remembrance of Nathan's prophecy (2 Sam. 12:10-12) tended to paralyze David's natural vigor." The consciousness of deserving all that might be sent upon him obscured his hope in God, and made him feeble and depressed.

David's flight revealed his true friends. Read the chapters for the interesting incidents of the time; and Psalms 3 and 4, which are supposed to have been written by David to commemorate the occasion.

IV. THE DECISIVE BATTLE, 2 Sam. 18:1-18. Rejecting the shrewd advice of Ahithophel, and accepting that of Hushai, David's friend, who remained at Jerusalem for the purpose of misleading the enemy, Absalom waited till he could gather a great army with which to attack and overcome his father. This was fatal. Ahithophel felt so certain that Absalom's cause was now lost, and all his hopes were ruined, that he went out and committed suicide.

Apparently self-conceit was the reason why he followed Hushai's advice, for that wily enemy of his put before him a picture of himself at the head of an immense army, like a world-conqueror, and all the nation, as it were, singing "Hail to the Chief."

But the delay gave David, and his two greatest generals — who had both remained faithful to him — time to collect an army from those who were still loyal; and overcome the advantage gained by the apparent, immediate success.

The army of David was divided into three divisions under three able generals, for the purpose of surrounding the enemy, and preventing him from concentrating against one spot, and possibly breaking through and killing the king.

8. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9. And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

10. And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

11. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle.

12. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom.

13. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*.

14. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak.

15. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

The Defeat of Absalom's Troops. The battle was in a wooded district, with clumps here and there, especially on the hillsides, giving chances for ambush, and for accidents to those riding. It is said that **the wood devoured more people than the sword devoured** (v. 8). "We may fancy the three battalions of David making a vigorous onslaught on Absalom's troops as they advanced into the wooded country, and when they began to retreat through the woods, and got entangled in brushwood, or jammed together by thickset trees, discharging arrows at them, or falling on them with the sword, with most disastrous effect." — *Blaikie*.

The Death of Absalom. "Amidst this scattered fight Absalom was separated from his men, and as he fled from a party of the enemy, the mule on which he rode carried him beneath the low branches of a spreading terebinth and left him hanging by the head, probably from a forked bough."

The first man who found Absalom spared his life, according to the command given by the king at the beginning of the battle. But Joab "knew that Absalom could not with safety be suffered to live, and that it would be difficult to rid the state of so foul a member at any time than now, when a just right to slay him had been earned in open battle." — *Killo*.

He therefore slew him, and cast his body into a pit near the place; and a great heap of stones was cast upon him, either in detestation of his memory, or as a monument to distinguish the place.

V. **THE TRAGEDY OF GRIEF**, 2 Sam. 18:19-19:8. David was waiting for a report of the battle. He had made arrangements for two athletic young men to bring him the news. One of these was now seen running alone. If he were alone, it meant tidings, for if he had been a fugitive from a lost battle there would be others with him.

The first report was brought by Ahimaaz, a good man and a friend of David. He tried to soften the blow by reporting the victory, and not yet speaking of the death of Absalom. David had no ears for the army, what he wanted was the news of his beloved son.

The second, official, report was made by Cushie, more exactly "the Cushite," an Ethiopian slave, who "blurts out, as if he were the bearer of good news, that which filled up the measure of David's woe."

"O my son Absalom I would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my

son !” “ There is not in the whole of the Old Testament a passage of deeper pathos than this. The simple beauty of the narrative is exquisite ; we are irresistibly reminded of him who, when he beheld the rebellious city of Jerusalem and thought of the destruction it was bringing upon itself, wept over it (Luke 19 : 41).” — *Cook*. “ His wish to die in Absalom’s stead was no mere extravagance of grief. David knew his own peace was made with God ; he could die at any time. If Absalom were spared in life he might yet repent. But such an exchange could not be.” — *Hanna*.

The effect of David’s grief was such upon the people who had fought with him that they “ gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle ” (19 : 3). Joab sees not only the injustice, but the danger, and fears not to bring real rebuke to the king who has put his personal grief above the welfare of his people (19 : 1-8).

VI. **ELEMENTS OF WEAKNESS IN DAVID’S CHARACTER.** We must not make the mistake of judging David’s weaknesses by the standards of the Christian world in this twentieth century. Some men say, — Here is David, who is said to be “ a man after God’s own heart ” ; he is no better than we and worse than many of us ever would think of being. And there is much truth in what they say. Only they draw the lesson that it makes no matter what sort of men they themselves may be, since that was the sort of man that God approved ! But they forget that while God loved the sinner there is no ground for the idea that He loved the sin. Indeed the story itself proves the reverse.

On the other hand we must not really judge David by the standards of the heathen nations around him. He had far more light than they, and more ways in which to learn the will of God.

David’s weaknesses were very human. He could not always resist the temptation of a beautiful woman. He had not so raised himself above the level of the rulers around him that the deliberate murder of a man who stood in his way was unthinkable. He was not a wise father, — witness not only his dealings with Absalom, but his neglect to punish the sin of Amnon, and his entire failure in the training of Adonijah (1 Kings 1 : 5).

We can trace some of the consequences which flowed from David’s sin and at the same time the nobler fruits that grew out of his repentance. It is not just to consider the sin without also considering the sincere penitence he showed for it. We can see the contrast between David, who sinned greatly, repented sincerely, and was mightily forgiven ; and Absalom, where the sin was the main current of his life, flowing without repentance or reform to his tragic end.



Tomb of Absalom. From a photograph.

LESSON VIII (21). — August 22.

A PRAYER FOR PARDON. — Psalm 51:1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* — PSALM 51:2.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 32 : 1-7.

Additional Material for Teachers : 2 Sam. 11 ; 12.

Primary Topic : ASKING GOD TO FORGIVE US.

Lesson Material : Ps. 51 : 1, 2 ; Luke 18 : 9-14.

Memory Verse : Forgive us our sins. Luke 11 : 4.

Junior Topic : HOW DAVID OBTAINED FORGIVENESS.

Lesson Material : Psalm 51 : 1, 2, 9, 10 ; Luke 18 : 9-14.

Memory Verse : Prov. 28 : 13.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : WHAT TO DO WHEN WE HAVE DONE WRONG.

Additional Material : Matt. 18 : 15-20.

Topic for Young People and Adults : PENITENTIAL PRAYER IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

Additional Material : Ps. 32 : 5 ; Prov. 28 : 13 ; Matt. 6 : 5-15 ; Luke 11 : 1-4 ; 17 : 10 ; 1 John 1 : 8, 9.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

All scholars will be interested in the Psalms, their uses and their division into five books.

Emphasize how this particular Psalm grew out of David's own experience and how, for this reason, it belongs to all time. The real value to us of this lesson will be in our bringing home to each scholar, David's repentance and forgiveness. The lesson is particularly adapted for all persons, both young and old, because of the great need of a deeper realization of the evil of sin and the way into light and peace which it points out.

The Younger Classes should pay no attention to the crime of David which gave rise to this Psalm. The lesson should bring out the desire of every one for forgiveness when he has done wrong ; the unhappiness of the child who has disobeyed his mother or father until he knows he is forgiven, and the readiness of God to forgive our sins when we are truly sorry. They can learn the difference between being really sorry for having done wrong, and merely asking to be forgiven.

The Intermediate and Senior classes can study the relation of confession and forgiveness ; the value of open confession when the sin has been public.

Young People and Adults should search the Bible, and so far as possible other sources, for penitential prayers, analyze and compare them, and learn what qualities are essential.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

If the Psalm was written by David, which is probable, it was very likely written during the time of Absalom's



David the Psalmist.

rebellion, or soon after. It was certainly written a considerable time after his great sin, and expresses his repentance for it.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Books of the Psalms.
The four steps from sin to holiness.
God's forgiveness of sin ; its relation to a better life.
The effects of forgiveness as expressed in this Psalm.
The conditions on which we may be forgiven.
A broken heart and a contrite spirit.
"Whiter than snow."

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : Sin, Repentance, and Restoration.

- I. DAVID'S NEED FOR FORGIVENESS.
- II. THE FIFTY-FIRST PSALM.
- III. FIRST STANZA : CONFESSION OF SIN, AND PRAYER FOR PARDON, vs. 1-4.
- IV. SECOND STANZA : FAITH THAT GOD WILL PARDON AND CLEANSE FROM SIN, vs. 5-8.
- V. THIRD STANZA : THE DESIRE FOR A NEW LIFE, vs. 9-12.
- VI. FOURTH STANZA : THE NATURAL EXPRESSION OF THE NEW LIFE, vs. 13-17.
- VII. WHAT TO DO WHEN WE HAVE DONE WRONG.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

For the story of David's sin and repentance see the *Commentaries* on 2 Samuel, and the Lives of David, referred to in previous lessons.

Works on the Psalms, especially those by Perowne, Alexander, and *Cambridge Bible. The Psalms and Their Story*, by W. E. Barton. Spurgeon's *Treasury of David. Helps to the Spiritual Interpretation of the Penitential Psalms*, by A. B. Baily-Brown.

See also Maclaren's *Life of David as Reflected in His Psalms*; Dr. John Ker's *The Psalms in History and Biography*; *The Poetry of the Psalms*, by Henry van Dyke.

I. DAVID'S NEED OF FORGIVENESS, 2 Sam. 11, 12. Up to about his fiftieth year David's life was a continual climbing to success. His battles, both within and without, were but the means of victories. He was one of the noblest of characters, "the romantic friend, the chivalrous leader, the devoted father," the broad statesman, the successful soldier, the sublime poet, the servant of God, the wise king.

Then, to outward appearance as suddenly as an earthquake, David the noble, the religious, fell into the two greatest sins against God and man, — adultery and murder.

The Downward Steps. 1. It is not at all probable that David fell without something in his life which prepared the way. Probably there was a relaxation of David's religious fervor and zeal, which were his guard. Then his multiplying wives, contrary at least to the spirit of the law, was in the same direction.

2. David parleyed with temptation. He should have closed his eyes and turned away, and then he would have been safe. And one sin led to another.

3. This occurred in a period of idleness, increasing luxury and self-indulgence, as shown by his sending Joab with the army instead of going himself (2 Sam. 10 : 7). "Satan tempts other men, but the idle man tempts Satan."

How We Should Judge David's Guilt. 1. There is no apology for his sin. He himself never apologizes for it. The Bible never apologizes for it. It is to be held up to execration and scorn. Greatness and genius are no excuse for wrong doing, and no substitute for a pure life.

2. David's guilt must be viewed in the light of his times if we are to judge his character aright. Most men of his time would have been little blamed, most kings would have had no compunction for the same deeds, and modern historians let their brilliant careers and noted deeds obscure their private characters.

3. We must judge of the man by his whole life, and not only by one act.

4. In judging of David we must take into account his sincere repentance, his open confession, and complete turning from the evil.

II. THE FIFTY-FIRST PSALM. 1. This Psalm belongs to the second book or collection of Psalms in the Psalter. It is the fourth of what are called the Seven Penitential Psalms.

2. While the titles of the Psalms are a later addition, just as the titles to the chapters of our Bibles are late additions, and are no part of the Bible itself, yet many of them are doubtless correct, and especially the titles of this Psalm ascribing it to David, and giving the occasion from which it arose. It is exactly adapted to these circumstances, more so than to any other occasion.

3. Yet it is on that account a fitting expression of the feelings of many persons and of the nation as a whole when in exile, and has been so used in all ages to this day.

4. It is perfectly possible that the last two verses belong to the time of the exile, as many think. But that would not indicate that the rest of the Psalm was not written by David. Compare the alterations and additions made to many of our familiar hymns. At the same time these two verses are well adapted to David's needs, that Jerusalem be built up and not be injured by his sin.

5. The inscription to the chief musician of David's choir shows that the hymn

I

1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness :
According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
3. For I acknowledge my transgressions :
And my sin is ever before me.
4. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done this evil in thy sight :
That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest.

was, as Professor Cowles suggests, "for perpetual use in the service of song before the congregation of Israel, and testifies that no false modesty and no indulged pride withheld him from making his confession public as his sin had been notorious. He had sinned before the nation ; so he would have his repentance go forth before not the nation only but the world."

III. FIRST STANZA : CONFESSION OF SIN AND PRAYER FOR PARDON, VS. 1-4. For a year David said nothing about his sin. His kingdom continued prosperous ; his army was victorious. He thought that he could go on as before. But his conscience was working all the time. We read in Psalm 32 : 3, 4, the effect the sin and silence had upon him. The knowledge that other people knew of the sin, and the danger arising from his conduct wore upon him. Bathsheba was the daughter of one of David's "mighty men," the wife of another, and the granddaughter of his wise counsellor Ahithophel. They might claim his punishment according to the Jewish law (Lev. 20 : 10).

When these silent influences had prepared the way, then God sent his faithful prophet Nathan to David. By a story-parable he led the king unconsciously to condemn himself, and then made the terrible accusation, **THOU ART THE MAN.** It was a dangerous thing to do, and showed the bravery of the prophet, as well as his obedience to the command of God.

But David rose to the heights of repentance and confession and received forgiveness and restoration (Ps. 32 : 5).

1. **Have mercy upon me.** "Admitting everything, confessing all, and humbling himself before God, he pleads for mercy, — mercy, simple and pure — nothing else." — *Cowles.* **According to thy lovingkindness.** This is the outflow of God's loving heart, tenderer than a mother's love for her child. **Blot out.** Make that which is done as if it had not been done. This may mean either the erasing of the debt from the book on which it had been inscribed ; or the wiping away, involving entire removal.

2. **Wash me thoroughly.** This is more than justification. The washing takes out the impurity, the soul is cleansed by it. The word means repeated washings, as if he were too vile to be cleansed with one alone. **Cleanse me.** This is a more general expression ; as if he said, "Lord, if washing will not do try some other process ; if water avails not, try fire ; let anything be tried, if only I may be purified."

3. **My sin is ever before me.** His conscience ever troubled him, it never slept.

4. **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.** The word "only" is striking, considering the nature, and the terrible results of his sin. But the sin against God, his infinite benefactor, the source of all he was of good, the sin against the purity and justice and love of God, was so much greater than his sin against men that it was like the black midnight shadow of the earth, in which the shadow of a man was unseen. **That thou mightest be justified** (vindicated as a just and loving judge) **when thou speakest,** as a judge giving sentence against my sin. **And be clear when thou judgest.** Be regarded as pure and holy and right in the judgment which thou shalt make. David wished all to know that God was good, no matter what came to himself. He knew, — indeed Nathan had reminded him, — that he had "given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme" (2 Sam. 12 : 14). Perhaps nothing touched the heart of David so much as the realization that he had tarnished the name of God in the eyes of the heathen.

II

5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
6. Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts:
And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.
7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8. Make me to hear joy and gladness;
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

What Struck Home. A college student, "son of a most revered minister high in authority in the church, grew very careless of his Christian experience. In spite of the efforts of his comrades he went from bad to worse until he had formed many evil habits. At last he was summoned to the President's office. While waiting in the anteroom he heard two students, who were not Christians, talking in the hall. 'What in the world's gone wrong with Hicks?' said one. 'He used to be as religious as his old father,' observed the other. 'There must be something wrong with the old gent.' In the outer office Hicks jumped to his feet. Just then the President entered. 'Professor,' he broke out, 'this thing's going to stop. If my old father's going to get the credit for everything I do I give you my word he'll never be blamed for another such thing as I am here for to-day!' " — *From the Sunday School Times.*

IV. **SECOND STANZA : FAITH THAT GOD WILL PARDON AND CLEANSE FROM SIN, vs. 5-8.** Freedom from sin comes to us from the truth that God is our Father, and loves to forgive, wants to blot out forever all sin from his children. It is often the best people who feel most clearly the need of forgiveness, because of the contrast between their ideals and visions and the degree to which they have attained them.

I was shapen in iniquity. In common with all humanity he had inherited the tendency to sin; the trouble was deeper than any single act. This is not given as an excuse, but as expressing his need that God himself shall cleanse him, and his faith that God is both able and willing to do so.

7. Purge me with hyssop. The priests used this bushy plant for sprinkling in the ceremonial rites of cleansing from leprosy, etc. Do thou, O Lord, pronounce me clean from the leprosy of sin.

Whiter than snow, which is absolute and perfect whiteness, and that not merely on the surface, but down in its depths, through and through. Only one thing is whiter, and that is God's sunlight, which resting among the snowflakes lights them up with its own whiteness.

8. The bones which thou hast broken. "The bones, as constituting the strength and framework of the body; the crushing of the bones being a very strong figure, denoting the most complete prostration, mental and bodily." — *Perowne.*

V. **THIRD STANZA : THE DESIRE FOR A NEW LIFE, vs. 9-12. Hide thy face from my sins.** Do not look at them, but as it were, cast them behind thy back (Isa. 38:17). Treat me as if I had not sinned.

"Does God in any sense ever punish forgiven sin?" is a question asked of the *Sunday School Times*. Their answer is, in part: "God blots out, annihilates, the spiritual result or disaster of any sin the instant it is brought to him in confession, repentance, surrender, and faith in the work of Jesus Christ. Then God so miraculously restores the relationship between the sinner and himself that the spiritual life of the forgiven one is made as though that sin had never been committed. But there may be physical or material results from the committed and forgiven sin that God does not undo. . . . A drunkard who loses a leg or an arm through an accident in a debauch, a business man who loses a fortune through sinful speculation, a criminal who is convicted and sent to prison for his crime, — all these men will be completely forgiven . . . the instant they confess these sins to God in surrender and trust in the name of Christ; but . . . these results are in a certain sense God's punishment of forgiven sin."

Results from Forgiven Sin. "What kind of a teacher would he be who overlooked all the breaking of rules and rubbed out all bad marks whenever you asked him to?" 'Dead easy,' was the answer. 'How then can a just God do it?' When we couldn't answer teacher drew a big white cross on the board and said that told the whole story. Christ, by bearing our sins for us on the cross, made it possible

III.

9. Hide thy face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.
10. Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.
11. Cast me not away from thy presence;
And take not thy holy spirit from me.
12. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
And uphold me with thy free spirit.

for God to forgive us without going back on his hatred for sin or his promise to punish it.

"A home question was whether forgiveness makes a sin all right. . . . He said he supposed so. It made us happy again. 'It didn't stop David's baby from dying,' spoke up one boy, 'and David must have always hated to remember about it.'

"So teacher explained that forgiveness removes God's wrath from being any longer directed at sinners, but it does not stop all the evil consequences. Sometimes we need the lesson of suffering so we won't do it again. Sometimes our sin has set in motion a string of consequences that nothing can stop. If in our sin we have broken the laws of nature and contracted some disease, like consumption, forgiveness does not usually heal the disease.

"Then a sin always gives us sad memories that we can't ever quite forget. To illustrate this he dropped a blot of ink from his fountain pen on a sheet of writing paper. He called it a sin. As soon as it was dry he rubbed it out with an eraser, and said the sin was forgiven. Then he asked us if the paper was just the same as before. Of course we could see that it was not, and he declared that every sin against God, no matter how quickly forgiven, leaves its mark on our brains, and sometimes on our bodies." — *Rev. William O. Rogers, in Sunday School Times.*

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God. What David wanted was the change Christ called a new birth (John 3: 3, 5). Forgiveness is of comparatively small account unless it results in a new nature, so that the succeeding life shall not repeat the sins of the past. We need to be freed from the love of sin.

Moody's Old Lantern. One day he brought over to Mount Hermon Boys' School "an old lantern that he had found down at the barn — an old, dirt-smears lantern. He brought it with him to the platform and placed it directly on the pulpit. The boys looked at it, then wondered, and then laughed. Then he spoke to them right away about the lantern; asked them what it was good for. They laughed again; of course it was good for nothing. And then he asked them what was the matter with it, and of course the lantern needed to be cleaned, and it needed to have a light put in it, and then, how he just brought that home to the boys! It could not clean itself. Somebody must put a light into it. He said that a man with a dirty life is good for nothing, useless, and then he asked them if they would not let God take charge of them and clean them up, and put the light of love in their hearts so that they could be of use. The lesson went home to those boys. They never forgot it."

— *From Robert E. Speer.*

"God, give me the chance to try again;
(I, who have missed the goal),
Let me, as flint, set my face again
To shape, to build up the whole.
Give unto me the coveted chance
To make of myself a Man,
To battle once more with a new-forged lance,
To lift from my soul the ban!

"God, give me the chance to march again
In the Vanguard of the race,
What matter the clouds, the shifting vane,
The blasts that wrinkle my face!
Let me endure both hardship and pain
As I scale the heights to You;
And hoping, loving, striving again,
To fashion my life anew." — *Selected.*

VI. FOURTH STANZA: THE NATURAL EXPRESSION OF THE NEW LIFE, vs. 13-17. Then (and not till then) will I teach. "None instruct others so well as those who have been experimentally taught of God themselves." — *Spurgeon.* Remember, for an illustration, the return of some of our soldiers from the front to serve as teachers of the newer recruits, even though they themselves were not theoretically so skilled in war as many an older officer still remaining in this country.

14. My tongue shall sing aloud, so that others shall hear the joy of my heart. I cannot then keep it to myself. Of thy righteousness, both in punishing and in showing mercy.

IV.

13. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;
And sinners shall be converted unto thee.
14. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation;
And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
15. O Lord, open thou my lips;
And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.
16. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it;
Thou delightest not in burnt offering.
17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

16. Thou desirest not sacrifice, that is sacrifice alone, without the repentance which it signifies. Better the true repentance without the form of worship in common use, than the form of worship without the true repentance from the heart.

17. The sacrifices of God, those which he desires most, those which give their value and significance to all outward sacrifices, are a **broken spirit**, where pride and self-sufficiency are broken down, and the heart is **contrite**, humble and penitent before God.

VII. WHAT TO DO WHEN WE HAVE DONE WRONG. *First, Repent.* Look at the sin in the true light, the light of God's righteousness, and be sorry for it; not sorry for the results of the sin, but sorry for the sin itself, and determined to forsake it altogether.

Second, Confess, to the one against whom we have sinned, — to the fellow man whom we have injured, — and always to God himself. Let the confession be as public as the sin.

Third, Make Restitution, so far as it is possible to do so.

Then will come the *Fourth Step* to holiness, the joy of the forgiven, and the mouth filled with praise to God.

As Christians we can never forget the central fact of our religion, — the wonderful Love of God, who sent his own Son into the world to die for us upon the Cross, that we might be forgiven, justified, and glorified in him.

LESSON IX (22). — August 29.

BEGINNINGS OF SOLOMON'S REIGN. — I KINGS 1:1-3:15.

PRINT 1 Kings 8:4-15.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding.* — JOB 28:28.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 101.

Primary Topic: SOLOMON'S CHOICE.

Lesson Material: 1 Kings 3:4-15.

Memory Verse: Wisdom is better than rubies. Prov. 8:11.

Junior Topic: SOLOMON'S WISE BEGINNING.

Lesson Material: 1 Kings 3:4-15.

Memory Verse: 1 Kings 3:9.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: CHOOSING THE BEST THINGS.

Topic for Young People and Adults: TRUE WISDOM AND HOW TO GET IT.

Additional Material: Prov. 4:1-8; James 1:5-8; 3:13-18.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

This is a splendid lesson for a **Decision Day**.

The practical side of this lesson can

be taught to every grade, for every child must make choices, either between two things equally good, or between doing right and doing wrong. And every choice makes a similar choice easier the

next time it must be made. Show the pupils how Solomon's choice was a good one, and how riches and power would have been of little value to him without wisdom.

The **Intermediate and Senior** classes can add to this a brief study of the question whether Solomon's choice was the best he could have made in the light of his subsequent history. What would be your choice?

The **Young People and Adults** can in addition search the Bible for the essential elements of true wisdom, and how it may be obtained.

All grades should make a clear comparison between the two princes, Adonijah and Solomon, and why Solomon was chosen to be king, rather than his older brothers. The circumstances under which Solomon's choice was made and the direction in which his wisdom was shown, as well as the true source of his great power and success, should be clearly developed. A practical application is found in the different objects placed before every person at the beginning of life and the reasons and motives for a wise choosing. Arguments, illustrations, and examples may well be employed in persuading each scholar to make the right choice and to make it **NOW**.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — According to Beecher, Solomon became king B.C. 1022. The Assyrian records make it B.C. 971.

Place. — The events of the first part of the lesson took place in Jerusalem. The choice of wisdom by Solomon was made at Gibeon, a high hill six miles north of Jerusalem, now called El Jib. Here was the ancient tabernacle constructed by Moses (2 Chron. 1:3).

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on 1 Kings, and 2 Chronicles. Crockett's *Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles*. Books of Old Testament Biography, such as Matheson's *Representative Men of the Bible*; Whyte's *Old Testament Characters. From Solomon to the Captivity*, a brief résumé by Rev. David Gregg, D.D.; *Solomon and His Times*, by Farrar (probably only

at second-hand book stores, and in libraries).

"Dreams," in the new *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Professor Thomson's *Brain and Personality*, "Practical Applications," and "The Significance of Sleep."

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

David's last days.

The rebellion of Adonijah.

What right had Adonijah to expect the succession?

Why was Solomon a better man to be king?

The coronation of Solomon.

David's dying instructions to Solomon, 2 Sam. 23;

1 Kings 2.

Did David's instructions break any of his promises?

Object of the Gibeon assembly.

The value of dreams, visions, ideals.

The choice before Solomon; and before us.

Was Solomon's the highest possible choice?

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Lowell's *Poems*, "The Present Crisis." "Solomon," a poem by R. C. Trench. "Pizarro's Choice," in Prescott's *Conquest of Peru*, I. 203. "The Two Feasts," in Abbott's *History of Cyrus the Great* (an old book in many libraries, but very probably out of print).

Compare the visions of Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, Dante's vision in his *Divina Commedia*, Milton's vision of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, Virgil's vision of the future in the *Æneid*.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Wise Life Choice.

- I. THE LAST DAYS OF KING DAVID, 1 Kings 1:1-4; 2:1-11.
- II. THE CORONATION OF SOLOMON, 1 Kings 1:5-53.
- III. THE FIRST MOVEMENTS OF THE YOUNG KING, 1 Kings 2:12-3:3.
- IV. SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE, 1 Kings 3:4-9.
- V. THE DOUBLE BLESSING, 1 Kings 3:10-15.
- VI. CHOOSING THE BEST THINGS.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Coronation of Solomon, Raphael.

King Solomon, Doré.*

Judgment of Solomon, Doré,* Poussin, Raphael,* Schopin.

I. THE LAST DAYS OF KING DAVID, 1 Kings 1:1-4; 2:1-11. After the defeat and death of Absalom, David returned to Jerusalem and reigned there the remaining months or years of his life, continuing his preparations for the building of

the Temple, and making arrangements for his successor. David had accomplished nearly all of his heart's desire for his kingdom. "As we open the historic page we find the Hebrew nation in the acme of its magnificence. It is the growth of centuries. It embodies the living of the grandest men of time. . . . It is the expression of God's matchless love, and God's fidelity in covenant-keeping, and God's forbearance and forgiveness." — *Dr. David Gregg.*

The Choice of a Successor. David at the age of seventy was an old man, grown feeble under the weight of his cares and troubles. The trouble with Absalom had doubtless aged him greatly. The question of a successor was in every one's thoughts. His elder sons, some one of whom would naturally succeed to the throne, "were men of fierce passions and haughty temperament, and would be singularly unfitted to carry out the peaceful and religious designs which David wished to bequeath to his successor." — *Farrar.* Hence under divine direction he had selected Solomon as his heir. He had probably been training him as a boy and young man for this end, showing him his plans, breathing his spirit into him, making him acquainted with the organizations and the treasures of the kingdom. It is a wise father who thus prepares his sons to be his successors, and wise children who accept the training with loving and energetic hearts.

II. THE CORONATION OF SOLOMON,

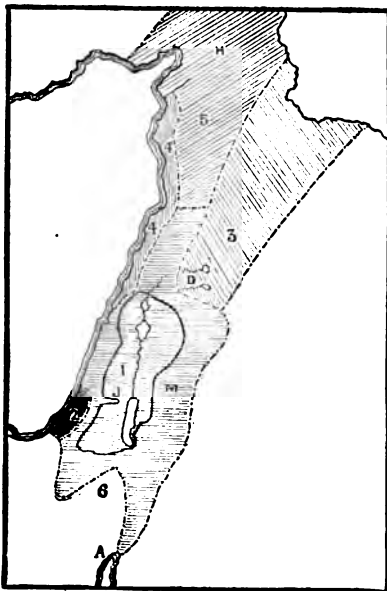
I Kings 1:5-53. Knowing the great feebleness of his father and his probable choice of Solomon as heir, Adonijah, who had become, by the death of Absalom, the heir to the throne if the succession were to be determined by strict descent, decided to take measures to secure it. He had been born during David's reign at Hebron, and was therefore a man between thirty and forty years of age. He, like Absalom, "was famous at once for his manly beauty and by showing no fitness for the throne, intellectually or otherwise. Following his example, he had for some time affected regal state in chariots, horses, and running footmen; but his father, always weakly blind to the faults of his children, shut his eyes to these dangerous assumptions." — *Geikie.*

When Adonijah thought his project ripe he invited his adherents, with all the king's sons (except Solomon), who seemed to have shared his jealousy, to a great banquet at the rock of Zoheleth near Enrogel, a fountain close to Jerusalem. Here, amid the mirth of the feast, the cry was raised, "Long live King Adonijah." Joab, the mighty warrior, and the chief of David's army, and Abiathar, one of the high priests, were among his abettors.

Nathan the prophet, learning of the proceedings of Adonijah, immediately set to work to defeat the plan. He informed Bathsheba of what was going on, and she went to David and told him; while she was yet speaking Nathan himself came in and confirmed her report. Measures were at once taken to proclaim Solomon king, and the attempt of Adonijah failed.

Solomon's Early Life and Training. 1. He was born about B.C. 1035 or 1034 in Jerusalem, and must have been about 19 or 20 years old when he became king.

2. His father was David, in the maturity of his age; and his mother was Bathsheba, the granddaughter of the wise Ahithophel. Solomon was their first son after their legal marriage (2 Sam. 12:24), and he had three younger brothers (1 Chron. 3:5).



The Empire of David and Solomon.

The black line outlines the Kingdom when Saul and David became King.

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Hebrews. | 5. Hittites. | D. Damascus. |
| 2. Philistines. | 6. Edomites. | M. Moabites. |
| 3. Syrians. | A. Red Sea. | H. Hamath. |
| 4. Phoenicia. | J. Jerusalem. | |

3. "He inherited from his mother and the counsellor Ahithophel, sagacity, quickness of judgment, judicial insight, and perhaps some measure of sensual weakness ; from his father, thoughtfulness, literary tastes, the skill of ruling, and an interest in religion. His bodily form and countenance must have borne the graceful characteristics of all David's children ; and, if we may follow the descriptions given in the Canticles, he was fair, with ' bushy locks, dark as the raven's wing, yet not without a golden glow,' tall and imposing." — *Tuck*.

4. He was placed under the care and training of the prophet Nathan, a faithful, pure, and wise teacher. He would be brought up thus in the religion and learning



David Declaring Solomon God's Anointed.

of the Jews. He developed a great taste for science and literature (1 Kings 4 : 32-34). He had the advantages of being the child of David's later years and the subdued piety which characterized those years. His mother, too, doubtless joined with David in his penitential piety, for she had great influence over him to the last.

5. On the other hand he was "born to the purple"; he was brought up in luxury and wealth, and knew nothing of the hardships which developed much of

the character of his father. The influences of the court were as bad around him as around Absalom, and he had to resist all the temptations of a beautiful and flattered youth.

III. THE FIRST MOVEMENTS OF THE YOUNG KING, 1 Kings 2 : 12-3 : 3. It was necessary first to become firmly established in his kingdom. Because of this—

First. The whole nation gave him their allegiance (1 Chron. 29 : 23-25).

Second. He kept Adonijah, who had tried to seize the throne, under surveillance, on his good behavior ; but when he made an underhanded attempt to become king, Solomon had him executed, since alive he would be a perpetual menace (1 Kings 2 : 13-25).

Third. Abiathar, the high priest who had joined in the plot with Adonijah, was degraded from his office, and Zadok, another descendant of Aaron, who had always been faithful to David, was made sole high priest (1 Kings 2 : 26, 27, 35).

Fourth. Joab, David's nephew, and the head of his army, had treacherously murdered his rival generals, Abner and Amasa, and had become insolent in his power, since for several reasons David could not depose him. Lastly he had joined in the rebellion of Adonijah. He was executed, and the mighty Benaiah became general in his place (1 Kings 2 : 28-35).

Fifth. Shimei, who had deserted David, joined with his enemies, and bitterly cursed him as he fled from Jerusalem, was first confined to Jerusalem on parole, and when he broke his parole and went among his nation's enemies, was executed (1 Kings 2 : 36-46).

Sixth. Solomon made an alliance with Egypt, the most powerful nation on his borders, whose enmity would endanger the peace of Israel, by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh. This marriage, while politically wise, did Solomon great harm in later years, by winning him away from a whole-hearted service of Jehovah (1 Kings 3 : 1-3).

4. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that *was* the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

5. In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

IV. SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE, 1 Kings 3:4-9. Early in his reign, probably as soon as the kingdom was established in peace, and free from danger, Solomon summoned the chief military leaders, the judges, governors, and the chief of the fathers (2 Chron. 1:2), to inaugurate his reign with a great religious festival. They met at Gibeon, the great high place near Jerusalem, because here was the ancient tabernacle so associated with their early history, and the brazen altar made by Bezaleel nearly 500 years before, under the shadow of Sinai; and because here Zadok, the newly appointed sole high priest, had charge of the sacrifices. Here Solomon offered a **thousand burnt offerings**, which served also to provide the necessary food for the immense assembly.

The Object, and the Result, of this great meeting was to unite the people under Solomon, to show the nation that he stood by the religion and the God of his fathers, to extend the influence of religion over the nation, to learn the sentiments of the people, and to bring all into harmony with himself and his plans. No kingdom can endure unless founded on deep religious sentiments. And no individual character is at its strongest or greatest without a religious basis.

Solomon stood on the threshold of a great, prosperous, well-organized kingdom, the most hopeful the world had seen. He might make it the ideal kingdom of the world, proclaiming the one true God, and true worship, and perfect righteousness.

It was in such an atmosphere, and with such preparation, that the **Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream.**

Dreams. It is a fact, still unexplainable, that God does yet at times manifest his will to his people in dreams. It does not follow, however, that all dreams have any real significance in our lives. They "become significant when they are the concentrated essence of the main stream of the waking thoughts, and picturesquely exhibit the tendency of the character." — *Dods*. The visions of men have had powerful influence on the world. The visions of the prophets have opened doors of glory into the future, to draw men on to a better life. "God comes to every one in youth, if not in such a dream as Solomon's, at least in some other way as real." — *Dr. J. R. Miller*.

"Daughters of time, the hypocritic days,
Muffled and dumb, like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and skies that hold them all." — *Emerson*.

We may ask "Why must I make my choice? God is far wiser than I am. But one of the conditions of living is that we must make our own choices." — *Dr. J. R. Miller*.

The Summons. 5. **Ask what I shall give thee.** There was no limitation in the offer. All ways of life were thrown open to him. He might choose anything since God in his omnipotence would supply it. This was a test of what was really uppermost in his desires.

Choosing is a test of character. It is not what we get, but what we choose; not money or poverty, but the love of money; not success in gaining pleasure, but what we put first in our life, that tests us as to what we really are. What we have and what we do often depend on many things outside of ourselves. What we choose is the work of our hearts and wills.

Illustrations. Temptations to a wrong choice meet every young person, in many ways. He cannot escape from them, but he can resist them, and make the right choice. "The proverb says: 'We cannot prevent birds of ill-omen from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from building their nests in our hair.' These thoughts may flit by, but unless you hold on to them they will do no harm. Let them go. A man in the woods seeing his friend had caught a wildcat called to him, 'Shall I come and help you hold him?' 'No,' he answered, 'I wish you would come and help me to let him go.' It is here that you need help, to let your wrong thoughts go. It is really quite easy. You hang on to them by a power called

6. And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

7. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in.

8. And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10. And the speech pleased the LORD that Solomon had asked this thing.

attention. All you have to do is to relax your grip and they drop out like a penny out of your hand; they do not have to be pulled like teeth." — *The Y. M. C. A.'s Two States*.

The Conditions Determining the Choice. First, the memory of what God had done for his father. So we are influenced by God's goodness to our fathers, and their gratitude to God, and their following of God, to ourselves choose what is right in the sight of God.

Second. His work was laid on him by God. The fact that God has put a man in a position of trust or duty creates an obligation to fulfil the trust and perform the duty. Whatever God gives us to do, he will enable us to carry on to its fulfilment. If therefore we are sure that we are in the place where God has put us, it is incumbent upon us to choose what is right, and will enable us to fill that place best.

Third. He was young and inexperienced, as compared with his father, who had had a considerable training before he came to the throne. I know not how to go out or come in. This expression is proverbial for the active conduct of affairs. Solomon had as yet no experience in governing men. This was a strong reason for asking what he did.

Fourth. The work to be done was very great. The nation was great; a turbulent people, often going astray, often contending with each other, with strong wills and an impulsive temperament. Should he make mistakes there were plenty who might be opposed to him, and brothers of full age ready to lead them.

The same four reasons still exist why every child should make Solomon's wise choice. God has been infinitely merciful to him in the past. He is "heir of all the ages." God has given him a place and a work in the world. He is young and inexperienced; the responsibility is great; the issues of eternal moment; life or death depends upon the choice.

The Choice. 9. Give therefore, in view of all these considerations, an understanding heart. Wisdom for the administration of his duties, wise principles, and wisdom in the application of them to the nation. What Solomon asked for was practical wisdom, sagacity, clearness of judgment and intellect in the administration of justice and in the conduct of public affairs. It would also include an aptitude for the acquisition of the higher branches of philosophical knowledge, natural and moral, which constituted the learning of his age.

But it meant even more than this. Solomon's own descriptions of wisdom imply that it rests upon a moral basis. No man can be a wise judge or wise king who is not first a good man. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

V. THE DOUBLE BLESSING, 1 Kings 2:10-15. And the speech pleased the Lord. Why? (1) It was right, noble, unselfish, like God himself. (2) It rendered it possible for God to give him large measures of the best things in all the universe. (3) It furnished an opportunity to give many other things. God loves to give. He gives us all we can beneficially receive. The more he can give us the better he is pleased.

11. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

12. Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

11. **Because thou hast . . . not asked for thyself.** God names some of the things which Solomon might have chosen; things which many a king of that age would have considered the first thing of importance, — **long life**, not so common among kings then as it might have been; **riches**, the aim of multitudes of people, kings and commons alike; and considered by many the source of all other good things worth while; **the life of enemies**, which would have made the other two more probable. Because he had not asked one of these things, God would give him a double blessing.



Solomon's Dream.

The First Blessing. The Wisdom he asked for. Instances of his wisdom are

given in the chapters that follow. His building of the temple together with his gardens and palaces, his water works and city improvements, governmental plans and commerce, — are all proofs of the blessing he had received. **So that there was none like thee**, etc. This has been literally fulfilled in history. His name still remains the symbol of the highest wisdom in this world's affairs.

The Second Blessing. The Worldly Blessings for which he had not asked. Both riches and honor; see the following lessons.

14. **And if thou wilt walk in my ways . . . I will lengthen thy days.** This promise was conditional. It would not be wise to lengthen the days of an unrighteous man. As the condition was not observed (1 Kings 11:1-8), the right to the promise was forfeited, and it was not fulfilled. He died at the age of 60, ten years younger than his father David.

The ancient proverb, "the good die young," is not proved by the facts. While there are always many exceptions to such rules as these, yet it may safely be said, that the doing of God's will does on the whole lengthen life.

15. And Solomon awoke; and, behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

15. And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. But its results were real, because the dream expressed what Solomon really was, and did actually choose.

VI. CHOOSING THE BEST THINGS. There are some who say that Solomon did not choose the best, but only the second best. Wisdom is always light. Worldly wisdom is light for this world, and for this world's work is as much better than folly as walking in the light is better than groping in the dark. But it is not a substitute for piety; it is the instrument of piety, adding to its usefulness and value. All Solomon's wisdom did not prevent him from falling into sin and folly.

Still we are told in verse 3 that "Solomon loved the Lord." His very choice proved that he had "the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom." He was first devoted to God's cause, the cause of religion, the cause of God's people; and now he wanted the wisdom needed to fulfil his duties, and carry on God's work. He was unselfish.

What is True Wisdom, and How Can We Get It? "The mind of God sees that to be folly which we think to be wisdom (1 Cor. 3:18-23). The late Professor Hodge suggested one time that 'he who attempts to convert the world by mathematics, or metaphysics, or moral philosophy is foolish, and his wisdom is folly.'" — *Kemp*. If we want to know the characteristics of true wisdom, which cometh "from above," through faith in Jesus Christ, we may read them in James 3:17.

"Has it occurred to you how much our life is made up of choices? We choose to rise about six instead of seven in the morning. We choose or reject certain food for meals. We decide to read *Ben Hur* and reject *Adam Bede*. We choose Frances for our chum rather than Mildred. We resolve to study music instead of painting. Shall it be this or shall it be that? Choose we must. A refusal to choose is in itself a choice. . . .

"A boy said to a middle-aged millionaire, 'It must be great to be rich. Just think what you can have.' The man replied, 'My boy, you can eat three meals a day, and that's all I can do. I can only wear one suit of clothes at a time. A modest sum can make you comfortable in your own home. Many a time I've had money in my pocket, but my heart's been aching. Some day the doctor is going to say to me, "I can do nothing more for you; better settle up affairs"—and all the money I have won't bring health.

"My boy, one day God offered me something far greater than money; he offered me life and salvation in his Son Jesus Christ. I accepted him and I am rich. He has wisdom, he has power, he has wealth, he has eternal life, and since he lives within me I have these, for they are within him. This is the supreme offer God makes to man, and the offer is to all. Will you accept him?' And he did. Have you?" — *Mrs. L. D. Baldwin*.

LESSON X (23). — September 5.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. — 1 Kings 5:1-8:66.

PRINT 1 Kings 8:1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.* ISA. 56:7.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 100.

Additional Material for Teachers: 2 Chron. 2:1-3:17.

Primary Topic: God's House.

Lesson Material: 1 Kings 8:1-11.

Memory Verse: I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go unto the house of Jehovah. Ps. 122:1.

Junior Topic : SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE.**Lesson Material :** 1 Kings 8 : 1-11.**Memory Verse :** Neh. 10 : 39 (We will not, etc.).**Intermediate and Senior Topic :** PUTTING OUR BEST INTO THE HOUSE OF GOD.**Topic for Young People and Adults :** THE VALUE OF A HOUSE OF WORSHIP.**Additional Material :** 1 Kings 8 : 27-53 ; Psalm 122.**THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.**

With the building of the temple came a new era in the development of religious power in Israel, for this temple centralized religious interest, as do the great power plants, such as at Niagara Falls. This application can be made by the pupils, with a little guidance.

The **Primary** grade should see in the Temple God's house, and should learn how we should treat it, how we should behave in it, and why we should love it.

The **Juniors** can learn in addition something of the glory and beauty of Solomon's Temple.

The **Intermediate** and **Senior** pupils can be led to see why we should have churches in which to worship God, and why we should put into them our best thought, to make them suited to the work that must be done in them, and the best materials. The older ones can briefly discuss the question as to whether or not the church should be the most beautiful building in the town.

For the **Young People and Adults** this is an excellent opportunity to study the tangible value of the house of worship to the town. The communities without such buildings can be compared in various ways with those possessing them, to see the actual influence of the church building upon the town. If it is possible to get a speaker, or at least literature from the Church Building Society, or the Home Missionary Society, the hour will be found intensely interesting.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Place. — Jerusalem. Perhaps also including Gibeon.

Time. — The Temple was begun in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and finished in seven and a half years. It was completed in the eighth month of the eleventh year (1 Kings 6 : 37, 38) and dedicated in the seventh month of some year, presumably the twelfth. This would bring its dedication in B.C. 1011, or Assyrian, B.C. 960. The time between the completion and the dedication would be needed for the

preparation for the assembly, and the gathering of the people from all parts of the country. It is, however, possible that the dedication was in advance of the entire completion.

THE ROUND TABLE.**FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.**

David's preparations for the Temple.

The sources and the cost of the materials used.

The place and form of the Temple.

Its size and its furnishings.

Why was so much money expended on the Temple?

The order of exercises at the dedication.

Is there danger of making our churches too costly?

The outward buildings as symbols of the spiritual life.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*, and Edersheim's *The Temple and Its Services*, are still first rate, although they may be found only in second-hand book stores, and the older libraries.

F. O. Paine's *Solomon's Temple*. Sanday's *Sacred Sites of the Gospels* describes the place where the Temple was built, although Herod's Temple then occupied it. Prof. George Adam Smith's *Jerusalem*. All the *Bible Dictionaries* and any good history of Israel will treat of this theme. Skinner in *The New Century Bible*, and Farrar in the *Expositor's Bible*.

Letters between Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre, are found in Eusebius, and also in Josephus' *Antiquities*, VIII, 2 : 6, 7, 8.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.**SUBJECT :** Building the Temple of God.

- I. DAVID'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM, 1 Chron. 28 : 10-21 ; 29 : 1-19.
- II. SOLOMON'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE BUILDING, 1 Kings 5 : 1-18 ; 2 Chron. 2 : 1-18.
- III. THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, 1 Kings 6 : 1-38 ; 7 : 13-51 ; 2 Chron. 3 : 1-4 : 22.
- IV. THE CEREMONIES OF DEDICATION, 1 Kings 8 : 1-66 ; 2 Chron. 5-7.
- V. PUTTING OUR BEST INTO THE HOUSE OF GOD.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Cutting Cedars for the Temple, Doré.
Building of the Temple, by Raphael.

*Solomon's Temple, from Schick's Model.**

*Solomon's Temple Restored, by Fergusson.**

I. DAVID'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM, 1 Chron. 28:10-21; 29:1-19. The whole of David's reign was in truth a preparation. It was as necessary that the kingdom and the people should be prepared as that the materials should be collected.

1. David established the kingdom firmly on a basis of peace.
2. He organized the priests, and choirs and orchestras for the religious services. They had become experienced before the large call for their services had come.
3. David had gathered together treasure belonging to the throne, — gold, silver, brass (bronze or copper), iron, wood; precious stones and semi-precious stones, and marbles.

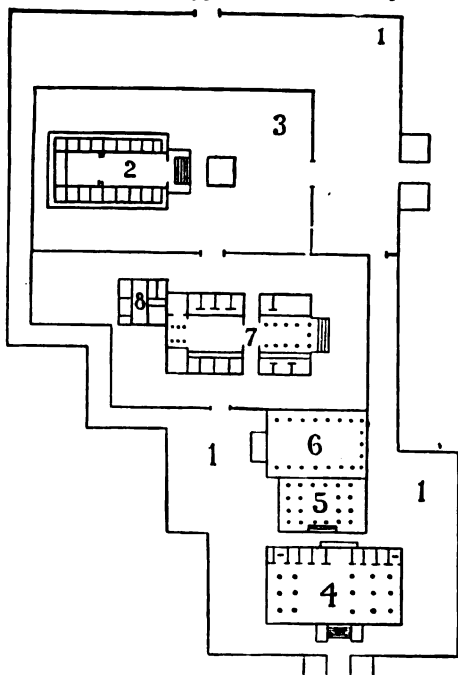
4. He gave for the same purpose a large amount of his private fortune, — 5000 talents of gold, 7000 talents of silver.

5. He allowed the people to have their share in giving, and they did so generously, and "rejoiced for that they offered willingly."

Some have thought that the huge sums mentioned were a mistake in transcription, or that the meaning of "talent" in this place was less or different from that to which we are accustomed. But according to an article in a recent *Youth's Companion* by Robert W. Woolley, formerly director of the U. S. Mint, princes and potentates gobbled up virtually all the known gold. The great accumulations of gold were the spoil of conquest, as in the case of Cræsus and David. Several thousands of millions of dollars' worth of gold is hoarded in India, besides the immense amount used in the magnificent buildings for temples and tombs.

Perhaps the immense, almost unthinkable sums spent daily in the World War may indicate the presence of more of the precious things of earth than we realize.

II. SOLOMON'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE BUILDING, 1 Kings 5:1-18; 2 Chron. 2:1-18. There is no mention of the gathering of gold, silver, or precious stones by Solomon. Probably David



Plan of Solomon's Temple and Palaces.

(After Geo. Adam Smith's "Jerusalem.")

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Greater or Outer Court. | 5. Hall of Pillars. |
| 2. The Temple. | 6. Throne Hall. |
| 3. Court of the Temple. | 7. King's House. |
| 4. House of the Forest of Lebanon. | 8. House of Pharaoh's Daughter. |

had accumulated a sufficient amount. But there were still some things necessary.

1. *Wood*, for beams, sheathing boards, ceilings, chambers around the Holy House, etc. For these purposes Solomon sent to Hiram, King of Tyre, who had been a great lover of David, and was more than glad to aid Solomon. But why did Solomon not use some of the trees which grew in his own country? Because the cedars which grew on the mountains of Lebanon were the finest wood that could be found anywhere in the world. The wood is of a red color and bitter taste, which prevents its injury by insects. It is very durable; there is in the British Museum a piece of cedar 3000 years old, taken from a palace at Nineveh. "It is tough, hard, fragrant, takes

a high polish which develops a beautiful grain, and it grows darker and richer by time." — *Dr. G. E. Post*. These cedars were floated down the mountain streams to the Mediterranean Sea, then formed into rafts and towed to Jaffa; and thence carried to Jerusalem over probably the same route as that followed by the modern railroad.

2. *Building Stones*, for the great foundations, and for other parts of the building of the Holy House. Some of these are still visible far below the present level of Jerusalem. These stones came from Phœnician quarries, and some from the quarries discovered under the very rock on which Jerusalem is built. The stones were all prepared at the quarry, so that nothing was necessary when they reached the site of the temple but to lay them carefully in their proper places. By this means it was that no sound of hammer or axe or any iron tool was heard during the building (1 Kings 6:7).

3. *Skilled Workmen*. The Israelites were not skilled in this sort of work. The skilled laborers were largely Phœnicians supplied by King Hiram of Tyre. The overseers were partly Canaanites and partly Israelites. "There were 30,000 Israelites levied to do the work one month and remain home two months, in turn. Besides these there were 150,000 laborers probably from foreign subject nations." These 180,000 were for the comparatively unskilled labor.

III. **THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE**, 1 Kings 6:1-38; 7:13-51; 2 Chron. 3:1-4:22. The Site was on Mount Moriah, overlooking the valley of the Kidron and the Mount of Olives. "The rugged top of Moriah was leveled with immense labor" and the huge stones "were strongly mortised together and wedged into the rock."

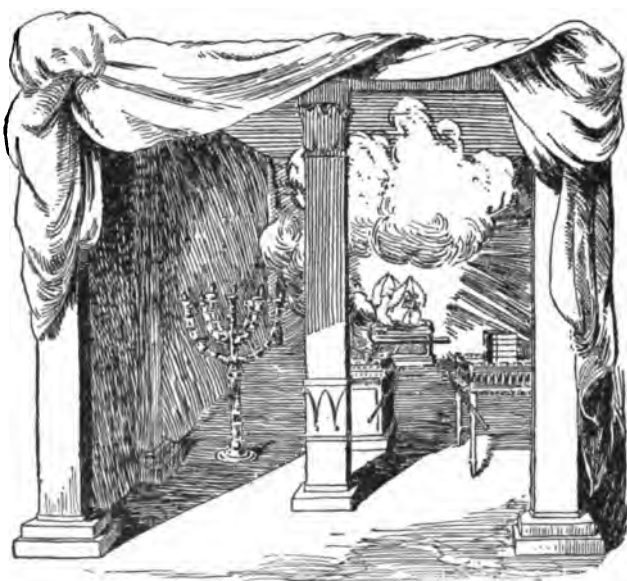
Its Size and Shape. "If a cubit was 18 inches, the temple proper was 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high." "The rooms into which this space was divided . . . were finished only 30 feet in height."

The whole was situated according to the points of the compass, the front entrance being toward the east.

Its Contents. For the making of the holy things within the temple a man named Hiram or Hiram, whose mother was an Israelite and father "a man of Tyre," was sent by the king of Tyre to Jerusalem, as being especially skilled for that work. He made, or oversaw the making of, (1) the great brazen altar of sacrifice, 15 feet high and 30 feet square, and the brazen sea, or laver, supported by 12 huge brazen oxen, each 7½ feet high. These were placed immediately in front of the entrance into the second court, so that the first things which the people could see as they entered were the altar of sacrifice for their sins, and the laver of cleanliness.

(2) The golden candlestick, signifying the guiding light from heaven; the table of shewbread, symbolizing the bread of life; and the altar of incense, symbolizing the life of prayer; all within the Holy Place, apart from the defiling influence of the world.

(3) The cherubim resting on and protecting the ark of the covenant of God, representing God's presence as dwelling among his people.



Candlestick, Table of Shewbread, Altar of Incense, and Ark of the Covenant.

1. THEN Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which *is* Zion.

2. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month.

3. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

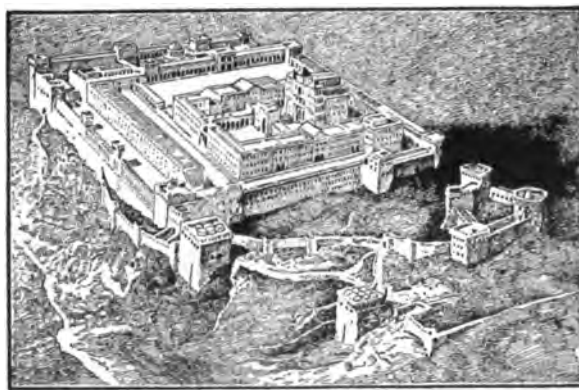
4. And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

5. And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, *were* with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

6. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy *place*, *even* under the wings of the cherubim.

Its Magnificence. "Alone and isolated in its grandeur stood the Temple Mount. Terrace upon terrace its courts rose, till high above the city, within the enclosure of marble cloisters, the temple itself stood out, a mass of snowy marble and of gold, glittering in the sunlight against the half-encircling background of Olivet. . . . Nor has there been in ancient or modern times a sacred building equal to the temple, whether for situation or magnificence." — *Edersheim*.

IV. THE CEREMONIES OF THE DEDICATION, 1 Kings 8:1-66; 2 Chron. 5-7. "No building in the world has ever been more widely famous than the Temple of Solomon. The ceremony of the Dedication was by far the most magnificent that



Solomon's Temple.

From a model (restored after Baurat Schick in Jerusalem).

the nation had ever seen. So immense were the preparations that it had to be postponed for nearly a year. It was thus nearly coincident with the autumn Feast of Tabernacles." — *Far-raw*.

After the Temple had been completed and the most of its furniture placed, a great assembly of all the people of Israel gathered for the dedication ceremonies. The first and central act in the great pageant was the carrying of the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, where David had years

before prepared a place for it, when he brought it to Jerusalem (see Lesson V. of this Quarter).

Note that there was no repetition of the mistake once made in the carrying of the ark, — the priests took up the ark (v. 3). With the ark were brought the tabernacle, and all the holy vessels which had been used during the long period when the tabernacle was the central place of worship in the land. The tabernacle and its furnishings were no doubt brought from Gibeon, where they were when Solomon began his reign (1 Kings 3:4). Now once again the ark and the tabernacle were reunited.

Preceding the ark, as a guard of honor, were all Israel, led by the king in person. Sacrifices were offered, so many that they could not be told nor numbered for multitude (v. 5).

7. For the cherubim spread forth *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

8. And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy *place* before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

9. *There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.*

10. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD.

11. So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

Then the priests placed the ark in the oracle of the house, the Most Holy Place which had been prepared for it, under the wings of the cherubim, which represented the presence of God, to which after this time no one but the high priest was allowed to approach.

Verse 8 should be read in the Revised Version, for a real understanding of its meaning, — "the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the holy place before the oracle; but they were not seen without."

9. *There was nothing in the ark save the two tables, etc.* "There had never been anything else in the ark; the book of the law and the pot of manna and Aaron's rod were beside or before the ark (Deut. 31:26; Ex. 16:33; Num. 17:10). It is easier to think that the author of Hebrews 9:4 has confused his phraseology than to think that he was ignorant concerning these Old Testament statements." — *Prof. Willis J. Beecher, D.D.*

Solomon took his seat in the presence of the people on a brazen scaffold 4½ feet high, 7½ feet broad, and 7½ feet long.

The order of exercises, according to Professor Beecher, was:

1. Sentences pronounced by the king, facing the sanctuary (vs. 12, 13).
2. Solomon turns and blesses the people, all standing (v. 14).
3. Address by Solomon, standing on the scaffold (vs. 15-21).
4. Dedictory prayer, by Solomon, kneeling (vs. 23-53).
5. Psalm 132, "Arise O God" (2 Chron. 6:41, 42), probably by the great white-robed choir and orchestra that stood to the east of the altar. Fire descended, the glory filled the house, and the people prostrated themselves (2 Chron. 7:1-3).
6. The response by the people, — "For his mercy endureth forever."
7. Solomon's closing address, 1 Kings 8:54-61.

The space near the huge altar was occupied by groups of musicians robed in white, and holding in their hands the glittering harps and cymbals and the psalteries. A hundred and twenty trumpeters, all priests, rent the air with the sudden blast of their silver trumpets as the king took his seat in his gorgeous robes, conspicuous in his manly beauty.

The mighty song of praise swelled from innumerable voices. The whole congregation were wrought to the highest pitch, and amid the blaze of sudden glory — the Shekinah, or glory-cloud, the token of God's approval. "The cloud was the veil that hid the glory of the Lord, for that glory was too bright to be seen by mortal eyes. This was the same as the pillar of cloud and of fire that guided the people through the wilderness."

V. PUTTING OUR BEST INTO THE HOUSE OF GOD. In all this work, which was going on for seven years, Solomon was putting his best into the House of God. The building did not attract attention from its size, or the grandeur of its architecture, — Egypt held many more wonderful in these particulars, — but because of its interior beauty and gorgeousness.

The great cathedrals of Europe, for the most part built during the Middle Ages, are so grand and so huge that they entirely overshadow the little dwellings of the people. There are treasures enough in some of them to keep the poor of the city from suffering for many a day, were they so used.

On the other hand there are wayside shrines, mission churches of mud and straw

or rough-hewed timber. What are the marks by which we may know the true church of God? And how may we be sure that the best of what the people had was put into it?

For some of the great churches the poor were taxed, and were forced to work long hours for small pay; the churches were built more for the glory of the nobleman of the region than for the glory of God. Did he put his best into it? Was his the best that was put into it?

Illustration. In a poem, "The King's Temple," a certain king planned to build a temple to God, by himself alone.

"From gilded spire to the great crypt stone,
It shall be my offering, and mine alone."

On a great white stone in the chancel his name was carved. But one night he dreamed that his name was gone, and a woman's name was in its place. After long search, he found an aged dame bearing that name.

"What work have you done?" the monarch said.
'I've built all the Abbey, and asked no aid.'
'If the king had asked us, I often thought,
I could not have given, for I have naught.
But when the builders were ready to sink,
I carried some water, and gave them to drink.'"

There are those who believe that the house of God should be no better than the average home of the people who worship in it. Would that be putting one's best into the house of God? Would it be doing Him the honor that is His due?

We can learn some lessons in church building from Solomon's Temple. "A true church is an echo of God," said Joseph Cook. And the building should be the fittest

instrument for expressing and repeating that echo, that men may know and feel the character and love of God. *Its foundation* must be deep, strong, and enduring. It is built (1 Cor. 3:11) upon Jesus Christ. *Its structure* should, with the best beauty and costliness at our command, be as perfectly as possible adapted to accomplish the object for which it was built. All the genius and invention and taste which are used in our dwellings and stores and factories and public halls should be applied to the church building. It should be better adapted to its work of teaching the children, of reaching the masses, of helping the poor, of training its people in Christian work, than the best machinery in the best factory in the town is adapted to its work. It should be a real home, a family home for all the people. And being for all the people, it should be as beautiful and cheerful as possible. The poorest have a part in it as much as the richest. - Mr. Ruskin is right



Ancient Shrines

in insisting that the public buildings should be the best in the city. The church should stand before the community as the expression to the world that religion is the most important thing there. A church that is the best building in the city for its purpose, and work, continually points men to heaven, keeps before their minds the importance of religion, and speaks to them of better things.

The worship must best express our devotion and gratitude to God, must train in spiritual life, and proclaim the true God to all men. Giving to the poor and to spread the gospel over all the world is an act of worship. The church is not a club-house

where a few can gather to enjoy themselves. It is not a vestibuled train of parlor cars, express to heaven on the Sunday railroad, where men have through tickets and can read their newspaper as they roll along, regardless of the world outside.

And swifter than the progress of school buildings and apparatus for the day schools should be the progress in the Sunday School buildings, and all the aids to teaching the Bible and training the children for the kingdom of God.

The Value of a House of Worship is beyond price. Many instances are known where the erection of a church building has kept alive a small church that was ready to perish. Read the reports of your denomination Church Building Society for specific cases. A group of earnest Christians, with some heroic leader, has many a time kept alive a certain amount of religious work in a community while meeting in a schoolhouse, or hall, or even in some cases in rooms over saloons. But the church cannot grow and cannot appeal to the irreligious in the community; cannot do its best work even for the church members and their children without a separate building, consecrated to the worship of God and indicating to the people of the community the presence of God, whatever their personal attitude toward Him may be.

LESSON XI (24). — September 12.

THE GLORY OF SOLOMON'S REIGN. — 1 Kings 10: 1-13, 23-25.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Blessed is everyone that feareth Jehovah, that walketh in his ways.* — Ps. 128: 1.

Devotional Reading : Isa. 2 : 2-4.

Additional Material for Teachers : 1 Kings 9 : 1-28 ; 10 : 14-29.

Primary Topic : A QUEEN VISITS A KING.

Lesson Material : 1 Kings 10 : 1-13.

Memory Verse : How much better it is to get wisdom than gold ! Prov. 16 : 16.

Junior Topic : THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON.

Lesson Material : 1 Kings 10 : 1-13.

Memory Verse : Prov. 8 : 11.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE CLIMAX OF ISRAEL'S GREATNESS.

Topic for Young People and Adults : TESTS OF NATIONAL GREATNESS.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

As this is our last lesson concerning Solomon, we should look particularly beyond this culmination of his glory and the lessons it teaches, to the tragical ending of his career. Note carefully causes that led to the downfall of so wise a man. The Book of Ecclesiastes puts into Solomon's mouth, as "the conclusion of the whole matter," "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

In the **Primary** and **Intermediate** classes the story will be the most prominent part of the lesson. They should know something about the greatness and glory of Solomon, and how it was proved by this visit from the Queen of Sheba. Let them see, as the application, Jesus' claim that "a greater than Solomon" is our King and our Friend, in Matthew 6 : 28-34 ; 12 : 42.

The **Intermediates** and **Seniors** can in addition make some study of the history of Israel, and of the map, to discover in what ways this was a climax in Israel's greatness, and the elements of weakness which were already present, which broke up the kingdom immediately after Solomon's death.

The **Young People** and **Adults** can carry still deeper this historical study, can make comparisons with the great empires of later history, and can discuss the question of our greatness as a nation — Are we truly great ? — Is the character of our greatness an asset or a liability ?

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The visit of the Queen of Sheba is said to have been "at the end of twenty years" (1 Kings 9 : 10). It is uncertain whether it means after Solo-

mon's twentieth year as king, or (as Beecher) twenty years after the completion and dedication of the Temple, or about the 28th year of his reign. We are safe if we regard the time as somewhat beyond the middle of Solomon's 40 years' reign.

Place. — Sheba, or Sabæa, the home of the visiting queen, was a wealthy region in southern Arabia, bordering on the Red Sea. It was 1500 miles from Jerusalem.

The visit was made to Jerusalem, the capital of Solomon's kingdom.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

What can be learned about Sheba.
The marvellous development of Solomon's kingdom.
Solomon's work for Jerusalem.
The hard questions.
"The half was not told."
The greater glory of the kingdom of Christ.
Solomon's last days.
The kingdom immediately after Solomon.
What in the kingdom led to this fall?
What are the conditions for stability in a nation?
What constitutes a great nation?

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, such as the *International Critical Commentary* by Prof. E. L. Curtis, D.D., on Chronicles; the *Cambridge Bible*, and the *Expositor's Bible*.

Matheson, *Representative Men of Israel*, in the chapter on "Solomon the Wise" (pp. 283-302), has a very unusual characterization of Solomon. Farrar's *Solomon and His Times*. Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*. Geikie's *Hours with the Bible*.

The Land and the Book, vol. II, for the moral condition of Jerusalem in Solomon's time; and vol. I, for Solomon's prodigality.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Glories of Solomon's Reign.

- I. A GLIMPSE AT THE MARVELS THAT SOLOMON WROUGHT, 1 Kings 9: 1-28; 10: 14-29.
- II. THE GREAT FAME OF SOLOMON, 1 Kings 10: 23-25.
- III. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON, 1 Kings 10: 1-13.
- IV. THE TRAGEDY OF SOLOMON.
- V. TESTS OF A NATION'S GREATNESS.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Solomon in All His Glory, Nast.*
The Queen of Sheba, Raphael, Le Lorrain, Ghiberti, Rubens,* Memling, Schopin.*
Evil Doing of Solomon, Vlengheld,* Erckhout, Von Schnorr.

I. A GLIMPSE AT THE MARVELS SOLOMON WROUGHT, 1 Kings 9: 1-28; 10: 14-29. Solomon was in great moral peril from his very success. An autocratic will with almost no outward restraint, uninterrupted success, countless wealth, luxuries and pleasures on every hand, are more perilous to the character than hidden reefs and secret currents and tornadoes are to a ship at sea. And God took every method of saving the king from going himself and leading the people in the wrong way.

God in a vision set clearly before the king the two ways (1 Kings 9: 1-9): the way of life and the way of death, and the conditions on which alone there could be enduring success. Solomon could choose his way, but walking in that way he must receive that to which the way leads.

The Climax of Israel's Greatness. 1. During the twenty or twenty-eight years of Solomon's reign he had brought his kingdom to its greatest height of glory. It had reached the full extent of its boundaries that had been promised. It included the whole strip of territory between the desert on the east and south, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west, except the narrow strip occupied by the Phœnicians, who were in alliance with him. Never after the death of Solomon did the kingdom even approach the same greatness as during his life.

2. *The Magnificent Temple*, described in our last lesson.

3. *The Royal Palaces* adjoining the Temple (1 Kings 7: 1-12).

4. *The Enlargement and Beautifying of Jerusalem* (1 Kings 9: 24; 11: 27).

5. *Water Works.* Solomon brought water from what are called the Pools of Solomon, near Bethlehem, in a costly covered aqueduct, the first known to history. This water was gathered in great reservoirs, and has always enabled Jerusalem to maintain its thousands of worshippers at different periods, and to endure long sieges.

6. *Fortresses.* The whole territory of the twelve tribes was also protected for

23. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

24. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

25. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

the first time by a number of strongholds, as if in anticipation of future invasions (1 Kings 9:17-19; 2 Chron. 8:4-6).

7. *Navy and Commerce.* Solomon, by a league with Tyre, had a wide-extended commerce with Africa and Asia, probably even to some part of India. The Phoenicians were noted seamen, and for the only time in their history Israel seemed likely to become a great commercial nation. They also had inland commerce with Egypt, and caravans across the Arabian desert (1 Kings 9:26-28; 10:22).

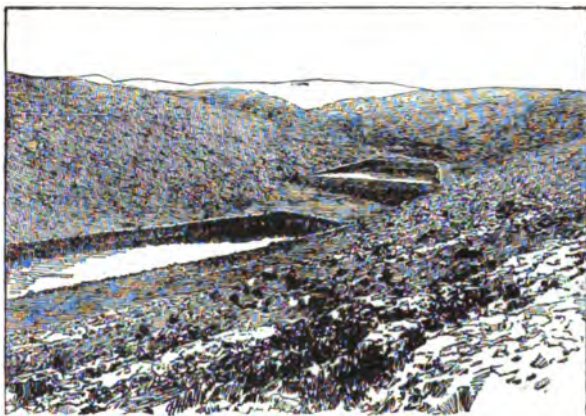
8. *Army.* Solomon introduced into the army of Israel chariots and cavalry, till now almost unknown to them. Nor were they intended merely for royal display, but from this time they became a regular and important branch of the military service (1 Kings 4:26; 10:26-29; 1 Chron. 1:14-17).

9. *Revenue and Wealth.* Gold was accumulated in great abundance, and silver and the fine cedar wood were made as common as the stones and common wood of the fields (1 Kings 10:27).

II. **THE GREAT FAME OF SOLOMON,** 1 Kings 10:23-25. Higher in wealth, wisdom, and power than any other human being had ever ascended, the kings and queens of the earth came to visit him in Jerusalem, and the whole world rang with his praise. It became a habit for the conspicuous sovereigns everywhere to go to see this wonderful king on his throne of ivory, and hear him discourse. They wanted to behold him as a veritable person, and hear him speak as he was reputed to speak, with proverbs dropping off his tongue, and songs falling from a voice that appeared inspired, as indeed it was. His actual renown as a prince was less than his reputation as a sage.

Solomon's Missionary Privilege. Solomon's marvellous wisdom and countless wealth and wide-extended kingdom were given him, not for himself alone, but as an instrumentality for making known the true God and the true religion, as a high mountain on which the altar fires of Jehovah, burning brightly, could be seen by the world lying in darkness. This privilege was the noblest gift of all. Had he continued to use it aright his missionary activity would have kept him from falling, and preserved the kingdom and its glories to his successors. It is a mistake to think that Israel was shut out from other nations for themselves alone. It was done to kindle a light that might shine around the world.

III. **THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON,** 1 Kings 10:1-13. Sheba is almost universally recognized as the ancient kingdom of the Sabæans in southern Arabia, bordering on the Red Sea. Discoveries of inscriptions, etc., many now in the museums of Berlin and London, show that before the time of Solomon this was



Pools of Solomon.

1. AND when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

2. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

a great and rich kingdom, with numerous gold mines, a literary civilization, and a wide commerce in gold, precious stones, and perfumes. "The immense abundance of spices in Arabia, and especially in the Yemen or Sabæan country, is noted by



The Queen of Sheba's Visit to King Solomon. P. P. Rubens.

many writers. Herodotus says that the whole tract exhaled an odor marvellously sweet (3:113)."—Cook. "The queen of Sheba represented a civilization which doubtless regarded itself as venerable and cultured by the side of that of the rude tribes of Palestine."

The Arabs have named this queen Balkis, and surrounded her story with endless legends. "We may be surprised," says Canon Tristram, "to find a 'queen'

holding supreme power among an Oriental people; but it is interesting to note that, from Solomon's time downwards, we find almost a succession of queens of southern Arabia. In fact, the Arabs of the country near Egypt seem to have been regularly governed by queens."

The queen had heard of the fame of Solomon, which through his commerce and conquests had extended through the known world (1 Kings 3:34). Concerning the name of the Lord. Solomon's religious fame, as distinct from his artistic, literary, military, or political fame. This included the magnificent temple he had built to Jehovah. The story of his early choice, and God's promises, and the wonderful fulfilment of them in the rise of an almost unknown people into a world kingdom of splendor and power, may have reached the ears of the queen.

Came to Jerusalem. "We must remember that she was a heathen from Arabia; she lived away fifteen hundred miles from the land of Israel. Nearly three months she must have been journeying under a blazing sun and across a burning desert of sand. We shall surely mistake greatly if we imagine she had undertaken so serious a transit because she was merely curious to look upon Solomon's wealth or prowess, his trading in apes and peacocks, his parade of royalty in the entertainment of princes, or listen to his repartees of intellectual sharpness and wit."

"Ancient journeys are not to be measured by miles, but by hours. Now, both the queen and her company travelled by camels, and the camel can only go, with any degree of comfort, at a walking pace. We may be pretty sure, therefore, that the party would not travel, on the average, more than 20 miles a day, which would give something like 75 days for the journey to Jerusalem, and the same for the return."—Pulpit Bible. Then the journey through the desert would subject her to many discomforts. And lastly she had with her a vast treasure (v. 2), very tempting to the robber bands of the region, especially in the land of Ishmael, whose "hand was against every man."

3. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not *any* thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

4. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5. And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

6. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts, and of thy wisdom.

Prove him with hard questions. To see if he was really as wise as rumor asserted. She tested him by riddles and enigmas of various kinds, which are so dear to an Oriental heart. Having tested his wisdom by these riddles, the queen would bring to him the great religious and moral questions which will keep asking themselves in the heart of every thinking person. The wonderful deeds of the God Solomon worshipped, and his readiness to answer prayer for wisdom and blessing, must have stirred her heart to its depths, in the hope that she, too, might find the true God and Saviour and Father of mankind; and also that she might learn wisdom for the guidance of her country from the same source.



Women Travelling Across the Desert.

Our report of the visit begins with her experience after she had met Solomon and opened her whole soul to him. When she had listened to Solomon's wisdom, heard his answers to her hard questions, and the solutions to all her problems, they were so far beyond all she even imagined that **there was no more spirit in her** (v. 5). Her amazement was so great that, as we say, it took away her breath. "Evidently she was subdued to the last degree of astonishment or humiliation. Adam Clarke is willing to go so far in his comment as to say 'She fainted.'"

She had been shown his wisdom in the ordering of his kingdom, and his architectural inventions, and everything that required great skill. **And the house that he had built**, referring to his palace, not to the temple. **And the meat of his table**, that is, both the great variety of food that was put upon the king's table (1 Kings 4 : 22, 23) and the costly furniture of the table (1 Kings 10 : 21). **The sitting of his servants.** Here "servants" means the officers and distinguished persons who were privileged to sit at the king's table, and were ranged in large numbers according to rank at the royal banquets. **The attendance of his ministers.** The alert attitude of his personal attendants. **And their apparel**, the gorgeousness of their livery or uniform, which is an important part of a fine establishment. **And his ascent.** His private passage from the palace to the temple; or, as some think, the impressiveness of his sacrifices.

6. **It was a true report.** She nobly acknowledges the truth, without any envy or conceit.

7. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*; and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8. Happy *are* thy men, happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom.

9. Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

10. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

11. And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.

12. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.

13. And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides *that* which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty: so she turned, and went to her own country, she and her servants.

7. **The half was not told me.** Nor would she have believed it if it had been told, for apparently she had not believed even so much as she had heard. An immigrant to the United States, a short time after his arrival, asked an American to write for him a letter to his relatives at home. In the letter he said, — "I eat meat three times a week." The American asked him, — "But don't you eat meat every day?" "Yes," answered the immigrant, "but they wouldn't believe that if I told them; I doubt if they believe even as much as I have said now. You see they don't get meat even once a week there."

The Half Has Never Been Told. Every one who enters the kingdom of heaven joins with the queen of Sheba in saying that they did not believe the half that had been told them, but that they now find that all that was told them was not half the truth. Irreligious men do not and cannot conceive the full blessedness of the kingdom of Christ. They do not believe what Christians say of it. It seems to them the exaggerated utterance of excited feeling. And yet Christians cannot express to them one half the true glory and peace and heavenliness of Christ in the soul.

Illustration. A boy who had been blind from his birth was, by an operation, made to see. When the bandage was removed, and for the first time in all his life he saw the glories of the world, the sunshine, the flowers and the trees, and all the beauties around him, he turned to his mother and said, "Mother, why did you not tell me that it was so beautiful?" With tears in her eyes she replied, "Dear boy, I tried to tell you, but you could not understand the half of it."

9. **Blessed be the Lord thy God.** The queen recognized the source of Solomon's wisdom. It was the gift of God, "who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

Royal Gifts. 10. The visit ended in the interchange of royal gifts, according to Oriental custom. To Solomon the queen gave a great amount of gold, and a vast amount of the valuable spices for which her country was so famous, — **there came no more such abundance of spices as those which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.**

13. "Solomon not only returns the queen's gifts with interest, but presents her with whatever strikes her fancy; and for her to have hesitated to ask would have been, according to Oriental ideas, to admit an inferiority of position."

As Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba far more than she gave him, so God loads us with benefits, and delights in giving us the most royal gifts, — his Son, eternal life, pardon, peace, joy, in addition to his countless earthly treasures.

And as Solomon gave the queen in addition whatever she desired, so God loves

to give us whatever we desire, so far as it is good for us, and so far as we are able to receive.

Jesus' Applications of this Story. Twice Jesus refers during his preaching to Solomon and his glory. Once, Matt. 6:28-30, he pleads for faith in the love and care of the heavenly Father, since He has clothed even the perishable flowers scattered all around them in the fields with a glory that Solomon had never been able to approach. Not that we are not to labor for our own support, but that we are not to worry about the necessities of life, — for if God so clothe the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you, his children?

The second time is in answer to the demand of the Pharisees that he should give them a sign, a special wonder, to prove that he was the one he claimed to be, — as if he had not proved it many a time, if they had but seen his wonders with open eyes! He says that the queen of the south, of Sheba, "shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here, and you will not even hear him."

IV. THE TRAGEDY OF SOLOMON. There were some things which the queen of Sheba did not see, — the oppression of the people, the temptation to luxury, the decline of his religious life, — which after his death led to the division of the kingdom. 1 Kings 11 tells the story of the remaining years of Solomon's reign. From the glories of life we turn to look upon a tragedy. We see how "the long summer day of the great king's reign was fated to set with gloomy indications of coming evil." The Scriptures are too wise to portray the grandeur without also showing its dangers; and they are too truly philosophical not to show the source of the downfall of the wisest of men.

"There are many instances in history of lives of genius and enthusiasm, of high promise and partial accomplishment, marred and flung away, but none which present the great tragedy of wasted gifts and blossoms never fruited in a sharper, more striking form than the life of the wise king of Israel, who, 'in his latter days,' was 'a fool.' The goodliest vessel may be wrecked in sight of port."

V. TESTS OF A NATION'S GREATNESS. During these years of the Great World War the nations have been greatly tested; or perhaps we should say, the testing has been more open to the eyes of men, for prosperity and peace test a man and a nation as much as war and adversity. A man of note, when asked what in his last life he would ask to have omitted, if he were allowed to live it over again, said he would not dare to omit any of the hard things, for he felt that without them he would have failed to become the man he was. It is by the struggle to escape from the cocoon that a butterfly obtains the strength, and the beauty, of its wings.

But there are spiritual contests which require as much courage as does physical war. The war against corruption and graft; against infidelity and irreligion; against disease and the weaknesses of the body; all test a nation's greatness. Such a war as is meant by great armaments on sea and land, wholesale killing, in order to gain a victory over another nation, does not test all sides of a nation. But even in a war of this sort, the purpose of its taking up arms, the care it takes of the sick and wounded of friend and foe alike, and of its prisoners, and its attitude toward the non-combatants of the land, — these do test the quality of a nation.

What Makes a Nation Great? Population? extent of territory? wealth? We can find exponents of all these in nations which we do not now feel to have been great. A country, whether governed by a king or a president, depends for its welfare upon virtue, both of its citizens and its rulers. Sin, as Jay insists, violates all the duties of civic life. "It destroys subordination; it relaxes the ties that bind mankind together, and makes them selfish and mean; it renders men enemies to each other."

"You might as well quench the sun, and suppose that the world can get along without light, as to think that men or that nations can do without God." "Let the English working classes once adopt atheistic principles, and I would not give five years' purchase for England's happiness, or England's fame." — *Farrar*. "Looking back to the history of nations, we may date the beginning of their decline from the moment when they ceased to be reverent in heart, and accumulative in hand and brain." — *Ruskin*.

LESSON XII (25). — September 19.

THE EVILS OF INTEMPERANCE. — Prov. 23: 19-21, 29-35.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.* — PROV. 23: 21.

Devotional Reading : Psalm 1.

Additional Material for Teachers : Dan. 1.

Primary Topic : KEEPING OUR BODIES STRONG.

Lesson Material : Prov. 23 : 19-21. Story Material : Dan. 1.

Memory Verses : Keep thyself pure. 1 Tim. 5 : 22.

Be strong. 1 Cor. 16 : 13.

Junior Topic : WHAT STRONG DRINK DOES TO THE DRINKER.

Lesson Material : Prov. 23 : 19-21, 29-35.

Memory Verses : Prov. 23 : 20, 21.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : DEADLY FOES IN DISGUISE.

Topic for Young People and Adults : ALCOHOL — FALSE CLAIMS AND TRUE CHARGES.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The treatment of this lesson will be similar in all grades, since the foundation of all temperance teaching should be its evil effects upon our bodies, and upon the body politic.

The **Primary** children can learn why we should keep our bodies strong and will see in the story of Daniel an illustration exactly to the point.

The **Juniors** can begin to learn some of the actual evil effects of the use of alcohol, and can have them impressed upon them by an object lesson of its poisonous effects.

The **Intermediates and Seniors** can learn some of the disguises under which alcohol is often presented to the unsuspecting, — patent medicines, liquors in candies, and others.

The **Young People and Adults** can study the claims of alcohol, — the claim that it is a food, that it pays a large revenue to the city, state, and nation, etc. ; and find specific refutation of these claims.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Alcohol and the Human Body, by Sir Victor Horsley and Dr. Mary D. Sturge.

Alcohol ; How It Affects the Individual, the Community, and the Race, by Dr. Henry Smith Williams. *The Liquor Problem*, by Norman E. Richardson. *Intoxicants and Opium in all Lands and Times*, by Wilbur F. Crafts. *Weapons for Temperance Warfare*, by Belle M. Brain. *Social Welfare and the Liquor Problem*, by Harry S. Warner. *Temperance Progress in the Nineteenth Century*, by J. G. Wooley and W. E. Johnson. *The Physiological Aspects of the Liquor Problem*, by J. S. Billings. *Wealth and Waste*, by A. A. Hopkins. *The Working Man and Social Problems*, by Charles Stelzle. *Temperance Talks with Children*, published by the National Temperance Society. *Problems of Boyhood*, by Principal Johnston of Chicago University. *The House We Live In* (the body), by Rev. William E. Griffis, D.D.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : Alcohol vs. Humanity.

- I. ALCOHOL'S CLAIMS.
- II. HUMANITY'S CHARGES AGAINST ALCOHOL.
- III. THE VERDICT.

- I. **ALCOHOL'S CLAIMS.** Alcohol claims to be a blessing to mankind. Why ?
 1. In some of its forms it is in itself very attractive, with its color and sparkle ; when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup ; when it moveth itself aright, R. V. " goeth down smoothly," making the act of drinking in itself a pleasure.
 2. It brightens up the wits and makes the dullest sparkle.
 3. It makes the sad and weary forget his troubles.
 4. It is a food, and a tonic. It helps men work and gives them courage
 5. It thrills the nerves with delight, promising joy and freedom.

6. Pure alcoholic drinks are more wholesome than the so-called "soft drinks."
 7. It is connected with social life and friendship, with jolly company, song and dance.

8. To refuse it makes a man look odd and unsocial to his fellows.

9. The poor man needs a pleasant place where he can meet his fellows after a hard day of labor. The warm and brilliantly lighted saloon maintained by Alcohol is such a place, especially attractive to those whose homes are poor and cold in winter.

10. Licensing a saloon brings in a good revenue to the government which would otherwise have to be raised by direct taxes; therefore Alcohol saves money to the taxpayers.

11. Men will drink, even if the liquor must be made and bought illegally; better have it open than sneaking.

All these, and more, does Alcohol put forward as its claims for existence in the civilized community. Its case seems to itself, and to many, very strong; it must win out. What has humanity to bring forward in opposition to such strong arguments?

II. HUMANITY'S CHARGES AGAINST ALCOHOL. Humanity comes forward, takes up the gage, and refutes the claims of the enemy.

1. *It is an enemy of the human body.* It inflames the stomach and impairs digestion; it reddens the eyes and the nose; it makes the man reel and stagger in his walk; "it stimulates and affects unfavorably the action of the heart"; it is not a food, but a poison; it renders the body more liable to contract disease, and is itself a cause of disease; it lowers the age-average and raises the death-rate; it brings physical degeneration to the children of its votaries.

2. *It is an enemy of the human mind.* Whatever its immediate effects are upon some minds, it does not brighten the wits of all men. "When the drink is in the wit is out," says the proverb. Many a word that seems like wit when spoken in a carouse proves to be the opposite when viewed with a sober mind. A young man accustomed to drink was one evening talking in what seemed to him a most brilliant way. A friend who was sober was a court stenographer, and made a verbatim report of all that the young man said. He showed it to him the next day when he was himself again. "Did I say all these foolish things?" "Yes." "Then God helping me, I will never drink again."

"A young man had been sent by his firm to secure an important contract. On the evening before he met some old college friends in the hotel. They insisted on his celebrating the meeting by having a 'high old time.' The next day he had a thick head, and lost the contract." — *Record of Christian Work*.

"The strain on the mind caused by the fact that men in the trenches are living in constant danger, the noise of bursting shells, the effect of the poisonous gases, together with the minor discomforts of trench life, test the ability of men to the limit, and many who are able and strong when they enter the trenches come out with shattered minds." — *Pilgrim Magazine*. And anything that lessens the ability of the men to endure this strain is looked upon as a dangerous thing. For this reason among others alcohol is barred to them.

Doctors and statisticians prove to us that feeble-mindedness and insanity are hereditary effects of alcoholism. A large majority of the inmates of our asylums come there directly or indirectly through strong drink.

3. *It is an enemy of property and wealth.* It impairs efficiency and lessens production. Ask any employer of labor which man is the best worker, — the one who takes home his wages on Saturday night, and spends his Sunday with his family, or the one who spends his wages and his time in drink. Which comes to work on the Monday morning with the clearest head and the most efficient hand? It is said that when prohibition came into a certain factory town the production of the Monday, instead of being the lowest by far of the week, became the largest. The men were rested, not befogged, by their Sunday rest.

"Some of the troops at the beginning of the war were given strong drink just before they made their raids 'over the top.' This was done to produce a sort of sham courage. Those who are in a position to know say that this custom was given up because of the bad effect of alcohol, and the demoralizing reaction that always followed." — *Pilgrim Magazine*. And we are thankful to note that this discovery was made soon enough to prevent any such methods of instilling courage into the army of the United States of America. "The soldier who drinks knows better than

19. Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.
20. Be not among wine-bibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:
21. For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.
29. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?
30. They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.
31. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright:
32. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

any one else that a drunken man is a mighty frail reed; he knows better than any one else that an army to be efficient must be sober." — *The Atlanta Constitution*.

Its cost to the community and to the nation is far more than the sum received as revenue from taxes and license fees. Some years ago the *Methodist S. S. Journal* said, "Take the national liquor bill and divide it by the number of saloons and \$5945 become the average cost to the people of each saloon. On the average the saloon pays back for nation, state and city taxes \$500. This \$500 is eagerly taken by a grateful country in lieu of \$5945." We are thankful to know that less liquor is being drunk during these last years, and that its making has been prohibited at least for a time. But the number of saloons have also decreased as the states and cities have become prohibition and no-license; the proportion per saloon is not necessarily altered.

And this is only the direct money cost. Take into consideration the waste in national resources, of the material which could be used for the people's food; the destruction of man-power because of its effect on efficiency, and on the health of the people; and the expense incurred by the public in caring for the defectives and delinquents who are such largely or wholly because of drink, — and the cost will multiply enormously.

Take also in consideration the relation between strong drink and individual poverty. The man's earning capacity is decreased, either by decrease in his efficiency, or by actual loss of time at his work. It wastes his wages, spending in the saloon money needed to provide food and clothes for himself and his family. Indeed it often is worse than a total loss, since the drunkard will use the hard-earned money of his wife or children, or pawn or sell the clothing they themselves have been able to procure. A drinking man is the first to be discharged if work is slack, and the last to be taken on if work increases. In many places even the moderate drinker is absolutely barred. **The drunkard . . . shall come to poverty** (v. 21).

One man used good logic: "I will tell you how it was. I put my hand on my head, and there was one big pain. Then I put my hand on my body, and there was another. Then I put my hand in my pocket, and there was nothing. So I joined up with temperance. Now there is no more pain in my head. The pains in my body are all gone away. I put my hand in my pocket and there are twenty dollars. So I shall stay with temperance."

A reformed drunkard met the saloon keeper, who asked why he never came to the saloon any more. "Because I have a lump on my side," he answered. "Oh, that's no reason," returned the man, "come over and have a drink and the lump will go away the sooner." "Yes, I know that, and that's why I stay away," answered the reformed man. "The lump on my side is the roll of bills I have saved by staying away."

4. *It is an enemy of the human soul.* **At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder** (v. 32). "No drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of heaven" (1 Cor. 6: 10). It is here that we see the fallacy of one of Alcohol's claims. "Ah," he says, "your own Scriptures shall convict you, not only the drunkard but **the glutton shall come to poverty** (v. 21). More harm is done by over-eating and by 'soft drinks' than by strong drink." These things have their bad effect upon the body and upon the purse, though no temperance advocate would assent to the claim that their effect is as bad as that of alcohol. But what of their effect on the soul? Did you ever hear of the man who at dead of night, prowling in the wake of his enemy in order to compass his murder, gave his trembling hand courage and strength to

33. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things :

34. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and* I was not sick ; they have beaten me, *and* I felt it not : when shall I awake ? I will seek it yet again.

accomplish his nefarious deed, by a drink of ice-cream soda ? or by any of the other " soft drinks " you can remember ?

Strong drink weakens self-control, perverts the will, sends the man into evil associations, deadens his conscience. The greater part of the crimes for which men are sentenced in our courts of justice come in some way from the use of strong drink. A census of our prisons will bring out the fact that nearly all owe their presence there to the effect of liquor. A constable who was taking a man to prison was asked his opinion on this point. He replied, " All that I have to say is that I never took a total abstainer to prison since I have been a constable."

III. THE VERDICT. Alcohol has been proved to be a deadly foe in disguise. We must banish it from our homes, from our cities and towns, from our nation. How shall we as individuals do this ?

20. Be not among wine-bibbers. Avoid evil company. Stop drinking yourself, and keep out of temptation. Do not seek it out. Do not tarry with it when you stumble upon it, but run away from it with all your might. Do not even look at it or allow yourself to dwell upon its fascinations.

William Penn was advising a man to stop drinking. " Can you tell me how to do it ? " said the slave of the appetite. " Yes," answered Penn, " it is just as easy as to open thy hand, friend." " Convince me of that, and I will promise upon my honor to do as you tell me." " Well, my friend," said the good Quaker, " when thou findest any vessel of intoxicating liquor in thy hand, open the hand that grasps it before it reaches thy mouth, and thou wilt never be drunk again."

A Long Dry Spell. The *Washington Star* tells this :

" Governor Livingstone Beeckman, of Rhode Island, said in Providence, apropos the gigantic strides that the temperance movement is taking :

" " The whole country now seems to look at excess as the young wife did.

" " " Jim, dear," said a young wife, " I do wish you'd stop drinking. Every time you go to one of those banquets of yours you get up the next morning pale and silent, you eat nothing, you just gulp down ten or fifteen glasses of water. Do stop drinking, won't you ? I know it can't be good for you, dear."

" " " All great men have been drinking men," said Jim. " Look at Poe, at Charles Lamb, look at Burns, look at — "

" " " Well, Jim," said the young wife, " you just swear off till you become a great man too, and I'll be satisfied." " "

Keep out of temptation.

" Will you walk into my parlor ? "
Said the spider to the fly ;
" 'Tis the prettiest little parlor
That ever you did spy."



" At last it biteth like a serpent."

" Poor Master Fly, so young and small,
Why did you go to Spider Hall ? "

BEWARE !

BEWARE !

BEWARE !

Get all to sign the pledge. This is one of the most effective ways of promoting temperance.

**THAT I MAY GIVE MY BEST
SERVICE TO GOD AND TO MY FELLOWMEN**

**I
Promise
God**



**and
Pledge
Myself**

**NEVER TO USE INTOXICATING LIQUORS AS A DRINK, AND
TO DO ALL I CAN TO END THE DRINK HABIT
AND THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.**

Signed.....

Governor J. Frank Hanley of Indiana some time ago formulated his sentiments on the subject of the liquor traffic in the following words:

"Personally, I have seen so much of the traffic in the last four years, so much of its economic waste, so much of its physical ruin, so much of its mental blight, so much of its tears and heart-ache, that I have come to regard the business as one that must be held and controlled by strong and effective laws.

"I bear no malice toward those engaged in the business, but I hate the traffic.

"I hate its every phase.

"I hate it for its intolerance.

"I hate it for its arrogance.

"I hate it for its hypocrisy.

"I hate it for its cant and craft and false pretence.

"I hate it for its commercialism.

"I hate it for its greed and avarice.

"I hate it for its sordid love of gain at any price.

"I hate it for its domination in politics.

"I hate it for its corrupting influence in civic affairs.

"I hate it for its incessant effort to debauch the suffrage of the country ; for the cowards it makes of public men.

"I hate it for its utter disregard of law.

"I hate it for its ruthless trampling of the solemn compacts of state constitutions.

"I hate it for the load it straps to labor's back ; for the palsied hand it gives to toil ; for its wounds to genius ; for the tragedies of its might-have-beens.

"I hate it for the human wrecks it has caused.

"I hate it for the alms-houses it peoples ; for the prisons it fills ; for the insanity it begets ; for its countless graves in potters' fields.

"I hate it for the mental ruin it imposes upon its victims ; for its spiritual blight ; for its moral degradation.

"I hate it for the crimes it has committed.

"I hate it for the homes it has destroyed.

"I hate it for the hearts it has broken.

"I hate it for the malice it has planted in the hearts of men — for its poisons, for its bitterness — for the dead sea fruit with which it starves their souls.

"I hate it for the grief it causes womanhood — the scalding tears, the hopes deferred, the strangled aspirations, its burden of want and care.

"I hate it for its heartless cruelty to the aged, the infirm, and the helpless, for the shadows it throws upon the lives of children, for its monstrous injustice to blameless little ones.

"I hate it as virtue hates vice, as truth hates error, as righteousness hates sin, as justice hates wrong, as liberty hates tyranny, as freedom hates oppression." — *Issued by the Massachusetts No-License League, Equitable Building, Boston.*

There are many signs of improvement, especially among the college students. The prohibition for the army has aided, and will continue to aid the temperance cause.

One War-Rule for All. In his Annual Diocesan Convention address Bishop William Lawrence voiced this strong plea for a single standard for soldier and civilian, for War and Peace.

"Abstinence from alcoholic drinks is as necessary for us as for the soldier. More than this, as the law prohibits the sale of liquor to the soldier, why should it not prohibit the sale of liquor to the citizen? I am not advising as to the best method of Prohibition. I am only insisting that, if the prohibition of drink is laid upon the soldier for efficiency, it must also be laid upon us all, else we are slackers. We have a civilization to maintain as well as to save. While we are making the nation strong for war, we are making it strong and fit for peace."

LESSON XIII (26). — September 26.

REVIEW: SAUL, DAVID, AND SOLOMON COMPARED.

SELECTION FOR READING: Psalm 72.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.* — 1 SAM. 16 : 7.

Primary Topic : STORIES ABOUT DAVID.

Lesson Material : Favorite stories of the Quarter.

Memory Verse : I will give thee thanks with my whole heart. PS. 138 : 1.

Junior Topic : THREE KINGS AND HOW THEY RULED.

Lesson Material : Review of the Quarter.

Memory Verse : 1 Chron. 28 : 9.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THREE KINGS AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD JEHOVAH.

Topic for Young People and Adults : FAULTS AND EXCELLENCIES OF SAUL, DAVID, AND SOLOMON.

We include in this Review the last five regular lessons of the preceding Quarter, in order to make a complete study of the ERA OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Before this era was the period of the Judges, a kind of Republic of God, with no permanent ruler, extending its sway over the whole country. The bond of its unity was that the twelve tribes were all of the same race, religion, and history.

About 1100 B.C. there came a change in the government.

The general character of this period was:

One king ruling over the whole people.

One temple and one capital aiding in the consolidation of the people into a nation.

A gradual fading away of tribal divisions and boundaries.

There were three kings during the period, each reigning about forty years.

It lasted, therefore, a little over a century, B.C. 1103-983 (Beecher).

It was a period of very rapid development in every direction.

Israel possessed its largest extent of territory.

It was the period of its greatest material glory.

The growth in its religious, moral, and intellectual life continued from this point to the end, less visibly, but with an ever-deepening current.

The Review of the three kings should be rapid, and include

The character of the king ;

The chief events of his reign ;

His success or failure and the reasons therefor ;

The lessons his story teaches us.

SAUL AND HIS KINGDOM.

B.C. 1103-1063.

The first king, with a great task before him.
 A good general — brave man — lovable man.
 Not sufficient ability to accomplish his work.
 Chief cause of his failure was moral. He was selfish and disobedient to God, without depth of religious life.
 His kingdom was small. His death tragic.

DAVID AND HIS KINGDOM.

B.C. 1063-1022.

Early Youth.

A shepherd ; skilled in music and song ; skilled with the sling.
 Trained in a religious home ; a student of the Scriptures.
 Anointed by Samuel.

Later Youth.

Victory over Goliath ; a soldier in the court of Saul.
 A friend of Jonathan the Crown Prince.
 Seven years in exile among the people.

King of Judah.

In training for the larger kingdom.

King of all Israel.

Victories over the nations ; Jerusalem made the capital.
 Organization of the army, the government, the priesthood, and the choirs.
 One central worship at Jerusalem ; the ark placed on Mt. Zion.
 Sin and repentance ; family troubles.
 Preparations for building the temple.

Results. David found the kingdom divided, distracted, subdued by enemies, and in a very low religious condition.

David left the kingdom great in many ways :

A united people.
 A greatly enlarged territory and population.
 Great progress in the religious life of the people.
 The kingdom highly organized in every way.
 Great increase in wealth and prosperity.
 Peace with all the surrounding nations.

SOLOMON AND HIS KINGDOM.

B.C. 1022-983.

He made a wise choice at the beginning of his reign.
 The building of the temple as the center of Israel's worship.
 Great renown in wisdom of all kinds, and in literature of many sorts.
 One of the greatest kings of the earth in splendor and in wealth.
 Famous for his buildings, his navy, his commerce, his cities.
 He maintained peace in all his boundaries.
 He failed at last from placing himself in the midst of temptation.
 His personal life was unhappy, according to Ecclesiastes, which is supposed to record it.
 He forfeited the conditional promise of long life, and of the continuance of the entire kingdom in his family.

THE GAME REVIEW. "The game element interests most classes, and it can be made a factor in some of these review tests by having a score-keeper in the class, and passing a question from one member of the class to another until it has been correctly answered; the score-keeper will record the credits won by the correct answers of each member, and the incorrect answers as demerits, so that at the close of the test the highest score can be announced. A figure can be agreed upon for each credit and for each demerit, such as plus ten and minus ten." — *S. S. Times*.

The class, if sufficiently large, can take sides for this game, as in an old-fashioned spelling-match. In this case the credits and demerits will belong to the side, and not to the individual member.

The questions can be given orally, or written on cards or slips of paper drawn by the members as their turn comes to answer. For the most perfect test these questions should be well mixed.

CHARACTERS. One interesting method would be to have each member of the class represent one of the characters, and have his identity made clear, and the facts of his story brought out by questions from the class, somewhat after the method of the game of "Twenty-Questions."

In some classes it would be interesting to have character sketches of the various men and women mentioned in the lessons. These must be very short; or the Review must be held outside of the Sunday School hour.

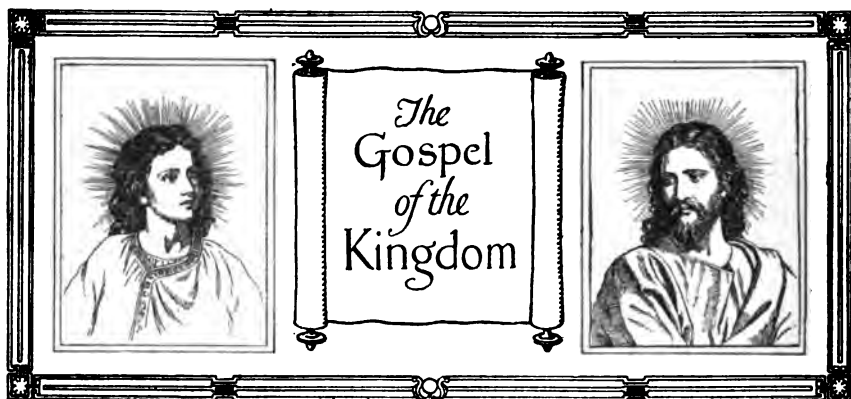
THE FIVE MOST PUZZLING QUESTIONS. "On the Sunday preceding Review the announcement is made that on the following Sunday, immediately after the opening and the taking of the offering are concluded, all of the intermediate and adult departments [so far as they are studying the same series of lessons] will come together as a whole. The request is also made that every class come prepared to ask five questions on the Quarter's lessons, selecting as far as possible the most puzzling questions to that class.

"On Review Sunday either the superintendent or pastor conducts the review, and as the classes ask the questions he puts them to the school as a whole to answer. In the event of any answer not being satisfactory he makes the required explanation.

"This brings out many points that were not clear in the minds of a number; and it creates a great deal of interest." — *Rev. G. W. Toms, Jr., in S. S. Times*.

SENTENCE REVIEWS.

1. It is better by far to have the heavenly Presence than to possess the most impressive personal presence.
2. Victory does not lie in numbers but in quality.
3. To refuse obedience is to choose another's service.
4. Heavenly estimates are all made by the heart.
5. There's a wonderful distance from "My Shepherd" to "Our Father."
6. Faith crowds out fear.
7. The flowers of friendship never bloom fairer than when the frosts of trial strike them.
8. The ability to pay honor where due proves the possession of honor.
9. Kindness explains many a great kingship.
10. When we get to thinking that God is dependent on us we are apt to take a lesson in our dependence on him.
11. Little deeds of love are long-lived.
12. Those who are too busy to care for their children will some day be too busy with bitter cares for their children.
13. Confession is the only cure for a disturbed conscience.
14. He alone is fit for any sovereignty who diligently seeks wisdom to serve.
15. There is only one thing that adorns a church, and that is the sacrificing service of its people.
16. Of anything that is worth while the half cannot be told; it must be seen and examined. — *Adapted from Henry F. Cope.*



FOURTH QUARTER.

(FIRST HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE.)

LESSON I. — October 3.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS. — Matthew 1 and 2.

PRINT Matt. 2:1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.* — MATT. 1:21.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7.

Additional Material for Teachers: Isa. 7:14-16; 60:1-22; Luke 1 and 2

Primary Topic: THE WISE MEN VISIT THE CHILD JESUS.

Lesson Material: Matt. 2:1-12.

Memory Verse: We saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.
Matt. 2:2.

Junior Topic: THE CHILD JESUS ESCAPES FROM A WICKED KING.

Lesson Material: Matt. 2:1-15.

Memory Verse: Psalm 91:11.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: THE COMING OF THE KING.

Topic for Young People and Adults: THE KING COMES AS A LITTLE CHILD.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

Introduce the class to the Quest of the Wise Men, the main subject of the lesson to-day, by referring to some of the famous quests of literature and history, ancient and modern, such as Jason's search for the Golden Fleece (see Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*); or Ponce de Leon's quest for the Fountain of Youth; or the various expeditions to find the North and South Poles. Greater and wiser was the search for Christ than were any of these quests, which cost so much of time, strength, and danger.

In the **Primary** and **Junior** classes the

time will be well and interestingly taken up in the story of the childhood of Jesus, with especial emphasis upon the story of the wise men, and Jesus' escape from Herod.

The **Intermediate** and **Senior** classes will find it interesting and profitable to study the Old Testament during the week previous, and to bring into the class those prophecies which show that Jesus was to be a King, and what sort of King these prophecies showed him to be.

The **Young People** and **Adults** will study the value to us of the fact that this King came as a little child and grew to manhood as did other children of his



CHRIST IN THE WORKSHOP.

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E. P. Dutton.

land and time. Why was this better than the sudden coming of a heavenly being, full-grown and powerful, to lead the Jews to victory?

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — Jesus was born probably in December, B.C. 5, four years before our Christian era; for December 25, B.C. 5, is only one week short of January, B.C. 4.

It was centuries after Jesus was born that men began to date history from his birth; and the monk Dionysius Exiguus who first published the calculations in A.D. 526 made a mistake of about four years.

Place. — Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the ancestral home of King David. His home was in Nazareth after the return from Egypt till he was about 30 years old.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew, and also on Luke. For example: *The International Critical Commentary*; the *Expositor's Greek Testament*; the *New Century Bible*; the *Cambridge Bible*; *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, by Plummer; *A Devotional Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, by Horton.

Mastering the Gospel of Matthew, by Prof. R. G. Moulton, Ph.D. (S. S. Times C. 4¢; 25¢ per dozen.) *Devotional Hours with the Bible*, by Dr. J. R. Miller. *Preparation of the World for Christ*, by Breed. *History of New Testament Times in Palestine*, by Prof. Shailer Mathews, D.D. *The Background of the Gospel*, by Rev. Wm. Fairweather, M.A.

All lives of Christ, — of which there are so many that it is hard to choose

among them; select those which interest you, and which are adapted to the age of the class.

The Education of Christ, by Prof. W. M. Ramsay, D.C.L. *The Wise Men, Who They Were*, by Prof. Francis W. Upham. *The Other Wise Man*, by Dr. Henry van Dyke.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Bethlehem.

The "taxing" mentioned in Luke: what was it?

The date of the birth of Jesus: how determined?

The meaning of the angels' song.

The star in the east.

The Magi: who were they?

Herod the Great.

The gifts of the wise men to Jesus.

What treasures can we lay at the feet of Jesus

The massacre of the innocents.

The training of a Jewish boy.

Nazareth.

The two summaries of the character of Jesus.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Childhood of Our King.

- I. INTRODUCTION: THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.
- II. THE BIRTH OF THE KING, Matt. 1; Luke 2: 1-7.
- III. THE ANGEL'S SONG, Luke 2: 8-20.
- IV. THE HOMAGE OF THE MAGI, Matt. 2: 1-12.
- V. THE NARROW ESCAPE, Matt. 2: 13-23.
- VI. THE TRAINING OF THE KING.
- VII. THE CHARACTER OF THE KING.

THE LESSON IN ART.

The pictures on the birth and infancy of Christ are almost innumerable. Write to W. A. Wilde Co. for a list of those in their collection.

I. THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW which we are to study for the next six months was probably written by the Apostle of that name. "He was familiar with Jewish modes of thinking, and habits of life, steeped in Old Testament phraseology, responsive to the Jewish point of view regarding Jesus, hence he was thoroughly alive to the difficulty of making Jesus understood and accepted by men of Jewish training in the first and second centuries.

"The Gospel . . . aims very obviously to show that Jesus was the Messiah, at once the normal and the unusual fulfiller of Jewish expectation, the outcome of a long historic process of Divine self-revelation, and the true answer to the prophetic anticipations of the completing of God's gracious purposes for the world." — Pres. Frank K. Sanders, D.D.

II. THE BIRTH OF THE KING, Matt. 1; Luke 2: 1-7. Both Mary and Joseph her husband were lineal descendants of King David.

Their home was in Nazareth of Galilee.

On account of a decree of the Roman Government that a census of all the in-

habitants of Palestine should be taken, Joseph and Mary were obliged to come from Nazareth to Bethlehem, their ancestral city, to be enrolled. This is called "a taxing" in the Authorized Version, but "an enrolment" in the Revisions. It was most probably an enrolment for the purpose of determining the amount of taxation.



From a photograph by A. Forder.

Mangers in the Interior of a House in Nazareth.

"The raised part of the room is called the 'Mustabeh,' where the family live; in the lower part are stabled the horse, cow, and goats,—the bins in the background are used for the stowing of family supplies."—*Fulleylove*.

Here at Bethlehem Jesus was born, as it had been foretold (Mic. 4 : 2) ; and this was the only fitting place, for he was the heir of David's kingdom, in whom should be fulfilled the promises to him that his house and his throne should be established forever (2 Sam. 7 : 16).

The Babe was "wrapped in swaddling clothes," not clothes regularly made, but strips of cloth three or four inches wide and several feet long wound round the child. And he was "laid in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn," so many others had come for the same purpose as they, as well as those there on other business. "The animals were out at the time, and the manger was not being used."—*Int. Crit. Com.*

If Jesus was born in December, as is probable, the time was symbolical, since the 25th of December comes when the longest night of the year gives way, and the days begin to lengthen.

III. THE ANGELS' SONG, Luke 2 : 8-20. There were shepherds somewhere out in the open country around Bethlehem, "watching their flocks by night," for the weather is not too cold for this in that section of Palestine, even in the last part of December.

Suddenly a shining angel blazed before the shepherds, saying to them,—"Be not afraid ; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people [all ages, all nations], for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

THE GLORIOUS CHOIR OF ANGELS. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, — the highest heaven, the highest degree, the highest strains.

On earth peace, — peace among men, peace with God.

Good will toward men, — toward all men, to such as keep his covenant and to those who remember his commandments to do them. To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace.



Bambino.

Florence.

Child in Swaddling Clothes.

"And this is the marvel to mortals revealed,
When the silvery trumpets of Christmas have pealed,
That mankind are the children of God."—*Phillips Brooks*.

2 : 1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

2. Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3. When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa : for thus it is written by the prophet,

Compare Isaiah's picture, — "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ; and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

IV. **THE HOMAGE OF THE MAGI**, Matt. 2 : 1-12. **There came wise men from the east.** The American Revision places a hyphen between the "wise" and "men" = "wise-men," to show that they together represent one word, "Magi," in the Greek. Among them were men of rank and learning, representing the best in the old civilizations, the men who were looking and hoping for more light and better times. That Daniel was among them is an indication of the kind of men they were.

Tradition describes them as three in number, from the number of their gifts, and represents them as kings, — "three kings of the Orient," and names them Melchior, Balthasar, and Caspar.

"East" here is plural, designating the eastern regions without specifying the country. **To Jerusalem.** They would naturally go first to the capital of the country whose king they were seeking.

2. **We have seen his star in the east.** Either they, in the East, saw the star ; or they saw it first in the east as a rising star.

There has been a great amount of discussion as to what this "star in the east" really was. Nothing can be decided with reference to it, and it is not worth the spending of much time in the ordinary class. It is enough that in some way, by some natural conjunction of planets or other heavenly bodies, or by some unusual manifestation as has been known in later times, these wise men who were learned in the study of astrology felt sure that a child had been born who should be the king of the Jews.

How the Wise Men Knew about the King of the Jews. Without doubt one of their chief sources was the Jews themselves, who were scattered everywhere, with their Scriptures and their hopes. They had synagogues in all the chief cities, where their Bible was read and taught. They proclaimed their expectation of a Messiah, who would deliver them from their oppressors. The prophecies in the book of Daniel pointed to this time for the coming of the Messiah.

There prevailed throughout the entire East, at this time, an intense conviction, derived from ancient prophecies, that ere long a powerful monarch would arise in Judea, and gain dominion over the world. Vergil, who lived a little while before this, owns (fourth *Eclogue*) that a child from heaven was looked for, who should restore the golden age, and take away sin.

1. **In the days of Herod the king.** This was Herod the Great, the founder of the Herodian family. He rebuilt the Temple in great magnificence. He died miserably in the 70th year of his age, and the 38th of his reign, on April 1, B.C. 4, so that the visit of the Magi must have been previous to this. It is this known date of Herod's death which shows the error in the calculated date of the birth of Jesus.

3. **When Herod the king heard of the coming of the Magi to Jerusalem and their question. He was troubled.** He was afraid of a rival. He was by this time a nervous wreck after a life full of crime. He knew he was hated by his subjects, and even by his family. The least disturbance would inflame his conscience and arouse his fears. **And all Jerusalem with him.** All those in power, officials of Herod, who owed their positions, and perhaps their lives, to him, would be afraid of anything that shook the throne.

Herod therefore sent for the leaders of the Jews, the chief priests who should know where the prophesied Messiah was to be born. They said **In Bethlehem of Judea**, and gave their authority, in the prophecy of Micah.

6. And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

7. Herod was already hatching his malicious plot. In the furtherance of this he called the Magi *privily*, privately, and *enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared*. That he might have some idea as to the age of the child. "The verb for 'enquired diligently' is derived from 'akros,' a point. The idea is, he ascertained to the last point." — *M. R. Vincent*.

8. Still in the furtherance of his plot, he sent the Magi to Bethlehem with the request, or command, that they should return and tell him where he might find him, that *I may come and worship him also*. It was necessary to his plot to tell this lie, for the wise men would not report to him if he had told them the truth.

9. The waiting for King Herod took up no little time, so that it must have been late in the afternoon before the Magi left Jerusalem, and it was night before they reached Bethlehem, or the star could not have been seen as a guide. Till it was dark the path would be plain. And finally the star stood over the house (v. 11) *where the young child was*, and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, for they had found their King and reached their goal.

THEIR MOTIVES FOR SO LONG A SEARCH. Not all the Magians, but some, and these among the number, were looking, hoping, for better times. For the times were very evil. There was a widespread spiritual and religious unrest. The educated had lost confidence in idols and were religious sceptics. "The gods and goddesses became an innumerable host." The entire life was saturated with the idolatrous religions. But they were forms merely. "A hopeless pessimism prevailed." See Lecky's *History of European Morals*.

Compare Tennyson's cry of the doubting soul.

"I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the world's great altar stairs
That slope through darkness up to God,
I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
On what I feel is Lord of all
And faintly trust the larger hope."

The Magians, learning from the Jews, began to feel the glimmering of hope, and they would search with all their might to find if the good news were really true, not only for themselves but for their countrymen among whom they were teachers and leaders.

The Wise Men of to-day are those who will undergo great toil and infinite pains to find their King Jesus, both for themselves and for the world. They are searchers for the Best and the Highest. There have been many seekers in these later years who did not find Him until they sought Him on the battle fields and in the trenches, where they had gone to give their lives that the world, — their children, their brothers' children, all who might come after them, — might be forever free and in peace. They have given their lives for others; and in that giving they have at last found

12. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

their King. The story of the religious life of the trench and camp in the World War is most interesting reading.

GIFTS TO THE KING. When the Magi at last found the king they had been seeking they fell down and worshipped him, in the Oriental manner of showing homage and worship. "The homage of the Magi is the first and typical acknowledgment of Christ by those who hitherto had been 'far off'; and their offerings were symbolical of the world's tribute." — *Edersheim*. "Three acts are here, — falling down, worshipping, and offering, — the first, the worship of the body; the second, of the soul; the third, of our goods. With these three, our bodies, our souls, our goods, we are to worship him. Without them all worship is but a lame and maimed sacrifice, neither fit for wise men to give nor Christ to receive." — *Dr. Mark Frank in Christ in Literature*.

They presented unto him gifts, according to the Oriental custom in paying visits to royalty. Setting forth greater truths than they knew, they offered to the Son of man and Son of God, myrrh, hinting at the resurrection from the dead; the royal gold; and frankincense that breathes prayer, — "myrrh to a mortal, gold to a king, frankincense to God." — *Upham*.

"There came three kings, ere break of day,
All on Epiphany;
Their gifts they bare both rich and rare,
All, all, Lord Christ, for thee:
God, frankincense and myrrh are there,
[Where is the king? O where? O where?
O where is the king? O where?

"The star shone brightly overhead,
The air was calm and still,
O'er Bethlehem's fields its rays were shed,
The dew lay on the hill;
We see no throne, no palace fair,
Where is the king? O where? O where?
Where is the king? O where?

"An old man knelt at a manger low,
A babe lay in the stall;
The starlight played on the infant brow,
Deep silence lay o'er all;
A maiden bent o'er the babe in prayer:
There is the king! O there! O there!
There is the king! O there!"

Giving Gifts to Our King. Study the following passages and write down the results.

1. *In what way we may give to our king.* By giving — to the House of God (Ex. 25 : 2, 8; 35 : 5, 20-29; Deut. 16 : 10, 17); to his poor (Matt. 10 : 42; 25 : 31-46); money (Ezra 1 : 2-4); service (1 Chron. 28 : 20; 29 : 5); ourselves (Prov. 23 : 26; Rom. 12 : 1); ungrudgingly (2 Cor. 9 : 7; Luke 21 : 2-4); with the heart (Eph. 6 : 6).

Our best gift to God, really our only gift, is the gift of our hearts, our love, our service, our devotion, — ourselves.

2. *The blessedness which belongs to such giving.* Ps. 112 : 9; Prov. 3 : 9, 10; 22 : 9; 28 : 27; Eccl. 11 : 1, 2; Isa. 58 : 10; Hag. 1 : 8; Mal. 3 : 10-12; Matt. 5 : 42; Luke 6 : 38; Acts 20 : 35; 2 Cor. 9 : 6; 1 Tim. 6 : 18, 19.

V. **THE NARROW ESCAPE**, Matt. 2 : 12-23. Herod had been waiting for the report of the whereabouts of the infant king, that he might carry out his infamous plot of killing him, lest he should be his rival and oust him from the throne. But God warned the Magi in a dream during the night, so that instead of returning to Jerusalem, they departed into their own country another way.

The fact that the Magi had disobeyed his instructions made him still more angry; and instead of giving up his plot because of his ignorance of the identity and whereabouts of the infant Jesus, he went so far as to kill all the male children of two years old and under in Bethlehem, in the expectation that Jesus would be slain among them.

The fact that this deed is not mentioned in history is no proof that it is not literally true. Herod's life was so full of cruel deeds that one more like this would not impress the historians of the time. Besides Bethlehem was at that time a very small town, and the number of such children could not have been large; some have estimated them at perhaps twenty.

But on the same night in which God warned the Magi not to return to Jerusalem an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, commanding him to take Mary and the

14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15. And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

child Jesus to Egypt, where they would be safe from Herod and his men. Here they remained until they learned that Herod had died. We have no idea of the length of time they remained in Egypt, nor how long after the death of Herod they returned,



Flight Into Egypt.

From an old print.

for news travelled very uncertainly in those days. When they returned to Palestine they apparently intended to settle again in Bethlehem; but learning that the new ruler was Archelaus, a son of Herod as bad as his father, they changed their plans and went to their previous home in Nazareth.

VI. THE TRAINING OF THE KING. 1. **THE HOME LIFE.** There is no place so good for the training of a child as an earnest, devoted, loving home. From the first days of his existence the child Jesus was surrounded by a most spiritual atmosphere, full of love and piety and good morals. This family was favored in belonging to that class which is neither rich nor poor. They were in the position to which every healthy and godly family can attain. It was to him, as to us, a great blessing that there were other children in the family. The only child has more hindrances in his growing up to be a loving, unselfish, kindly man, ready to "get along well" with others.

2. **HIS HOME TOWN, Nazareth,** was "in touch with the currents of popular, commercial, and political life." George Adam Smith specially notes that not far from Nazareth, within sight of the ridge that surrounded the village, were great roads thronged with travel; the road to Jerusalem crowded annually with pilgrims; the road from Egypt with its merchant caravans; and the highway between Acre and Damascus along which legions marched, and princes swept with their retinues. "All the rumor of the empire entered Palestine close to Nazareth." And yet the village stood somewhat away from all this life, as in a quiet backwater of the stream.

3. **HIS HOME LESSONS.** He was thoroughly trained in the stories and teachings of the Old Testament, as is clearly proved by his after life. The Bible is full of the marvellous stories which are never forgotten. His mother doubtless told them over and over again to her little son, as bedtime stories, or in the moments of rest during the work of the day.

He certainly had training in the commandments of Jehovah, His promises, His warnings. They were graven on his mind in ineffaceable characters. He must very early have learned parts of them by heart. First of all, probably, Deut. 6 : 4, 5 ; 7 : 7.

The Jewish hopes of a Messiah-Redeemer, of a glorious national future, were in the very air he breathed. He could not but be patriotic. As Edersheim says, "There could not be a national history, nor even romance, to compare with that by which a Jewish mother might hold her child entranced."

And the patriotism, and the hope, would be increased by the fact of the existence of the Roman yoke, which was so irksome and galling. The taxes were heavy. Roman soldiers, laws, money, idolatry, forever reminded him of their subjection to a heathen ruler. When Jesus was about ten years old the insurrection of Judas occurred in Galilee (Acts 5 : 37). All these things would stir the soul of the growing boy with patriotic impulses.



Repose in Egypt.

Olivier L. Merson.

4. **HIS SCHOOL LIFE.** When Jesus was six years old his parents sent him to school with the other Jewish boys of his town. This school was held in the audience room of the synagogue = the meeting house, the Jewish church. It was a day school and Sunday School in one. The school was for boys only, — the girls learned whatever seemed necessary for them to know within the walls of their homes.



Oriental Schoolroom.

From a photograph.

Jesus learned to read and write. He probably learned

three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic which was the common language of Palestine in that day, at least among the common people. The principal school book was the Old Testament, with the comments of the Rabbis.

In the school, too, like all school-boys, he could learn by practice the unrecited lessons of honor, faithfulness, honesty, fairness, courtesy, kindness, and brotherly love.

5. **LEARNING A TRADE.** All Jewish boys were obliged to learn a trade even if their main education was to be that of a professional man or teacher. So Paul, though educated to be a teacher of others, learned, and

later practised, the trade of tent-making. In most cases the son took up the trade of his father. Jesus therefore learned from Joseph the trade of a carpenter (Matt. 13 : 55; Mark 6 : 3). The carpenter shop was probably in some part of the house in which the family lived. The word "carpenter" means more than with us, including all

workers in wood, our cabinet-maker as well as our carpenter. If he worked for his neighbors they would soon know how honest and faithful he was in everything he did.

Daily toil is one of the great schools for learning life's lessons, — in skill, accuracy, faithfulness, self-denial, science. Labor is "life and glory" when it is performed from the highest motives, inspired by love for God and for man, and pervaded by mind. Manual labor has often been considered by some people disgraceful; but even these have found that the purpose of the toil makes all the difference in the world. Note for example the amount of manual labor required from the private soldier not only in the digging and building of the trenches, and other defences on the battle line, but in the camp far behind the front. And among these private soldiers are those who have never before performed such labor.

"There is a beautiful tradition that Joseph, his [Jesus'] reputed father, died while Jesus was a child, and so he worked not merely to earn his own living, but to keep the little home together in Nazareth, and Mary and the younger members of the family depended upon his toil."

6. THE TRAINING OF GREAT RELIGIOUS MEETINGS. All of the Jews were bound, if they were able, to go up to Jerusalem at the time of the great religious feasts, and at the age of twelve years the boys were considered at the age of responsibility, when they were bound to keep this law. We are familiar with the story of the first time that Jesus visited the temple at Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, the most frequented of these feasts (Luke 2:41-50).

Wisely religious people do not neglect to go to the great religious meetings. For while there are peculiar blessings in praying in secret, and in the small groups of "two or three" of one heart and one mind, and common needs, — there are also peculiar blessings in large and enthusiastic religious meetings. The feelings receive new impulses, the understanding is enlightened, the heart touched, the whole religious life quickened and revived. Out of such meetings grow unity, broad knowledge, new methods, social progress, new ideas, deeper inspiration.

VII. THE CHARACTER OF THE KING. As the resultant of this training Jesus became the Ideal Boy, and the Perfect Man (Luke 2:40, 52). He chose this course, he sought this goal, and he took of his free will the training that led to it. Like every one that follows him he said, "I am master of my fate; I am captain of my soul."

The human experience of Jesus brings the comfort, strength, and inspiration of a similarity of experience with our own, of a holy life amid the same difficulties and trials, the same temptations and battles, the same hindrances and perplexities. He passed through not only the experiences of manhood, but of childhood. Hence he is the children's Saviour and Help.

1. The boy grew in body and in spirit.
2. He was obedient to his parents.
3. He became strong in spirit and in stature. He was a sturdy, healthy boy. This was necessary in order to do his manhood's work.
4. He increased steadily in wisdom; was filled with wisdom.
5. He drank at the very source of true success, — the grace of God.
6. It naturally followed that he was a winning, attractive youth, in favor with God and man. This was one of the crowning heavenly gifts for success in his life work.

Boys! Study this story of Jesus' training, and see how nearly like Him you can become.

LESSON II. — October 10.

BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS. — Matt. 3:1-4:11.

PRINT Matt. 8:18-4:11.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* — MATT. 3:17.

Devotional Reading: Deut. 6:4-16.

Additional Material for Teachers: Luke 3:1-4:13; Heb. 2:18; 4:15.

Primary Topic : JESUS PLEASING THE HEAVENLY FATHER.

Lesson Material : Matt. 3:1-17.

Memory Verse : This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Matt. 3:17.

Junior Topic : JESUS AT THE RIVER AND IN THE WILDERNESS.

Lesson Material : Matt. 3:13-4:11.

Memory Verses : Matt. 3:16, 17.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : JESUS OVERCOMING TEMPTATION.

Additional Material : 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE APPEAL OF APPETITE, PRIDE, AND AMBITION.

Additional Material : John 6:15; Heb. 2:18; 4:15.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

To grow like the Master, it is necessary to observe Him closely, to study His character and His doings as a boy and a man. An excellent illustration is found in the traveller in Florence, who one day made his way to the gallery of the Pitti Palace. He said: "An artist was sitting before a picture, small in size, quiet in coloring, and representing ideally the countenance of our blessed Lord. After gazing for a while, I began to watch the artist who was copying it. I could not but admire the care and patience she displayed in adding touch to touch with such a wonderful, earnest, loving purpose, ever turning her eyes to the beautiful original and absorbed in the task of endeavoring to reproduce as faithfully as in her lay, a likeness of its loveliness."

The **Primary** scholars can see in this lesson the fact that Jesus at all times pleased God, and how we should imitate him.

The **Juniors** can learn how Jesus "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin"; and can learn how we can resist the temptations that are always coming to us.

The **Intermediates and Seniors** can add to this the character of the temptations, why they appealed to Jesus, and the reasons why they were wrong.

The **Young People and Adults** can in addition analyze the temptations, and see how they can really be seen to cover all the sins which men are tempted to commit.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time.—The Baptism was about January, A.D. 27, with Jesus about 30 years old, and ready to enter upon his work for man. The Temptation immediately followed.

Place.—The Baptism was at one of the fords of the Jordan; tradition points out that opposite Jericho, but the exact place is unknown.

The Temptation took place in the Wilderness of Judea northwest of Jericho.



From a photograph.

The River Jordan near Jericho.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Matthew, including those named in our previous lesson. *Lives of Christ.* Dr. Alexander Whyte's *Walk, Conversation, and Character of Our Lord* is excellent. Maclaren's *Expositions: Matthew.* Henry Clay Trumbull's *Duty Knowing and Duty Doing.* *The Divine Man*, by George Dana Boardman. Books on the Lord's Prayer, the clause "Lead us not into temptation,"

as for example those by Farrar, and Washington Gladden.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The story of John the Baptist.
What was the purpose of Jesus in being publicly baptized?
The testimony of God to his character, — three times.
What was the object of the Temptation?
The Tempter, — in what form did he appear?
Origin of his representation in art.
Studying the three Temptations separately:
What was the temptation in each case?
What was the wrong in what was proposed?
What would have been the effect of yielding?
By what weapons was the victory gained?
Illustrations in human life to-day.

Later temptations of Jesus.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Preparation of Jesus for His Work as the Messiah.

- I. THE HERALD OF THE KING: JOHN THE BAPTIST, Matt. 3:1-12.
- II. JESUS CONSECRATED BY BAPTISM, Matt. 3:13-17.
- III. THE FORTY DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS, Matt. 4:1, 2.
- IV. THE THREE GREAT TEMPTATIONS, Matt. 4:3-11.

V. THE APPEAL OF APPETITE, PRIDE, AND AMBITION.

VI. THE OVERCOMING OF TEMPTATION.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

The Greek story of the Sirens, told by Homer in *The Odyssey*. Trench's *Poems*, "Orpheus and the Sirens," illustrates the two ways of overcoming their fascination. The tract *Parley the Porter*. In George Eliot's *Romola*, Tito gradually deteriorates by yielding to temptation. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, "The Battle with Apollyon." Rogers' *Greyson Letters*, "The Madman and the Devil." Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. *Help for the Tempted*, by Prof. Amos R. Wells.

THE LESSON IN ART.

Jesus Taking Leave of His Mother, Ploekhöst.*

Baptism of Jesus, by Maratta,* Perugini,* Murillo,* Bellini, Doré.

Temptation of Jesus, by Ary Scheffer,* Cornecelius,* Hofmann,* Botticelli, Tintoretto, Perugini, Doré.

I. THE HERALD OF THE KING: JOHN THE BAPTIST, Matt. 3:1-12. John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1), was about six months older than Jesus. He had grown up in the wilderness, where he had communion with God, with nature, and with the Scriptures. There in silence and alone the great truths of the kingdom of heaven were written on the prophet's soul.



Titian.

John the Baptist Preaching.

In the summer of A.D. 26, when John was 30 years old, the call of God came to him. The times were ripe, the fire in his soul burned to blaze forth in action, and God made known to him that the time had come when like his predecessor Elijah he must burst upon the scene like a lightning's flash from the dull, rising clouds of danger.

John preached in the wilderness; the people came to him, not he to them. His field of action extended along the Jordan nearly two-thirds of the way from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee. Prof. George Adam Smith describes this broad deep valley as almost without villages because of its remarkable formation. The river lies 300 feet lower than the ocean level. Vegetation is an exceedingly rank jungle and here are the lairs of the wild beasts. John found in this valley several requisites for his mission: (1) solitude, (2) safety, (3) much water, (4) natural food, including locusts and wild honey. He was independent of the town, and of other men; he could

risk antagonizing his hearers by his bold preaching, for he had nothing to lose. John preached repentance from sin, and from the breaking of all God's laws; and to prove that they were truly changed in heart, really repentant for their sins, his converts were baptized in the presence of all the people. Those who came out of

13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

curiosity, with no wish to repent, John denounced with scathing words, — “offspring of vipers”; “the axe is laid unto the root of the trees”; “the chaff will be burn with fire unquenchable.”

We can apply the teaching of John to many in our own age and in our own land. There are wrongs in all the warring nations which need to be removed. We need the Holy Spirit of God. We need to abhor vice and dishonesty and selfishness and lying and the whole list of crimes and wrongs. The whole church, of every name and sort, must stand up against the evils of the land, until God makes for us a newer, purer, better country than we have ever known.

II. JESUS CONSECRATED BY BAPTISM, Matt. 3:13-17. John the Baptist had been preaching for six months, arousing intense interest in all parts of Palestine. His fame reached as far as the town of Nazareth where Jesus was still living. Jesus was now about 30 years old, in his full maturity. Perhaps attracted by the reports of John's preaching; certainly led by the same Spirit of God who guided John, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee unto John, to be baptized of him. John recognized the superiority of Jesus. He felt that he himself was the inferior, only the door-keeper, the preparer of the way. He strenuously, earnestly protested, with deep feeling — *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?*

WHAT WAS THE MEANING AND THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM OF JESUS? (1) *It fulfilled all righteousness.* “It was right for all good men to be baptized; and Jesus, as a man, was under obligations to do whatever was incumbent on other good men.”

“Now righteousness is the sure foundation stone that our Lord had come to lay in Zion. Righteousness is the first foundation stone of all our salvation. Righteousness, as a word, is the greatest word for us in all our New Testament. Our Saviour had been fulfilling all manner of righteousness from his youth up: ceremonial righteousness, moral righteousness; legal righteousness; and spiritual righteousness; and he is but following that to the end.” — *Whyte.*

(2) *It was a public profession of religion.* It showed the people where he stood, as belonging to the kingdom of God, and always opposed to the kingdom of Satan. Jesus had no sins to be forgiven and needed no repentance; but this public profession of his attitude was all the more necessary.

(3) *It was his consecration to his life-work.* He showed himself to the people as on the side of right, as entirely consecrated to righteousness and the holiness of the kingdom of heaven. And when the time came for him to begin his open ministry, a brief time later, those who had set themselves in the ranks of John's disciples would recognize him as one who stood for the same things as themselves, and would the more willingly follow him as their leader. We see in the first four of Jesus' disciples those who had already put themselves on the side of righteousness, as disciples of John (John 1:29-34).

GOD'S TESTIMONY TO JESUS AS HIS SON, vs. 16, 17. Jesus, when he was baptized . . . saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. Not only in the manner of a dove, but in the bodily shape of a dove (Luke 3:22), in order to give visible impression which would strengthen and enforce the truth of the invisible reality. The dove was the symbol of the gentleness of the power of love, by which Jesus was to gain his victories. His power lay not in the storm and earthquake and fire, but in the still, small voice,

“It spoke of peace, it spoke of love,
It spoke as angels speak above,
And God himself was there.”

17. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

1. THEN was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

And lo a voice from heaven, which had been opened, unto him, giving him a new revelation of his close connection with heaven for his work on earth. This was the first of the three times, at three crises in the life of Jesus, when this voice of assurance came to Jesus, — **Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** A citizen of a little country city, a worker at a carpenter's bench, without wealth or rank or social power or civil office or church authority, — for him to undertake to transform the world! to overthrow empires! Nothing but the absolute assurance that he was the Son of God, that God indorsed him, that he was doing God's work in the power of God, could enable him to enter upon his Mission.

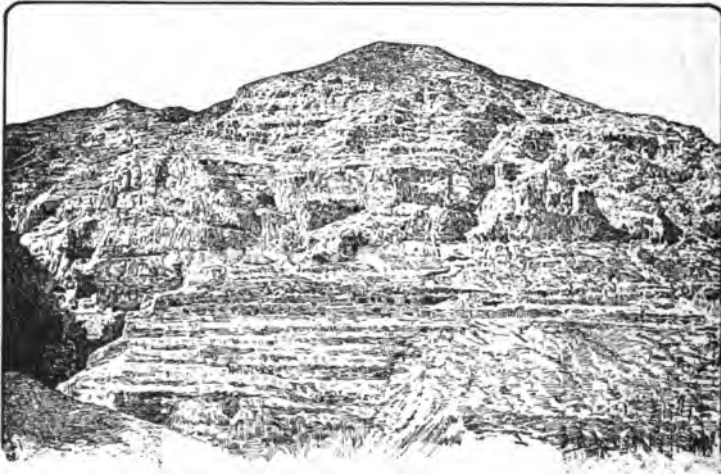
To *Every Christian*, as to Christ Himself, are these three things essential; and in proportion as he has received them will he be fitted for any work or mission or reform in promoting the kingdom of God.

1. He needs to publicly profess his faith in Christ, and to stand pledged on the side of righteousness.

2. He needs the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whose symbols are a dove and fire.

3. He needs the approval of God, manifest to himself and to others; a divine call and indorsement in some form.

III. THE FORTY DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS, Matt. 4:1, 2. Jesus was now by his own action and by the endorsement of God definitely on the side of the



Mount Quarantania.

Traditional place of the Lord's temptation.

kingdom of heaven. He was consecrated to his life-work. Now he enters upon a new series of questions and problems as to his future plans. Doubtless he had been thinking and planning for years with regard to the mission which he knew was his; but not yet had he come to a full decision; and not yet had he been really tested. Now the decision must be made, and at once.

Therefore he was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Mark says "the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." "He was driven by his own mind and heart and imagination, all filled and enforced by the indwelling and the inward drawing of the Holy Ghost," says Dr. Alexander Whyte.

The Wilderness was the lonely mountainous region northeast of Jerusalem, the most retired place accessible, where no one could interrupt or interfere, while Jesus was meeting his tests.

All the accounts either say or imply that the temptations were continued throughout the entire 40 days. Therefore the three great temptations recorded in detail were merely the last three great attempts of an enemy who had already been fought, and well-nigh conquered. Jesus came to them a victor over the other struggles; success in these assured the complete victory.

We must distinguish here between two uses of the word "tempt": one meaning "tempt" as we use it, the other more exactly "test." Satan tempts; God tests. What is the difference? It lies in the purpose of the trial. Satan tempts in order that men may fall. God tests in order that men may gain the victory and be strong and good. God uses Satan's temptations to change them into tests.

During this period in the wilderness Jesus was so intent on settling the great questions that confronted him — whether he was the Son of God, in what way he should accomplish his mission, in prayer for guidance, in seeking light, in deciding on duty — that he was unconscious of hunger; and in his lonely place there was no food to be had.

As long fasts as this have been known in modern times. Upton Sinclair, in the *Cosmopolitan*, states that he knew a man who fasted 50 days. "Fasts of 40 or 50 days are quite common now. I have met several who have taken them. The longest fast I have heard of was 72 days."

This quiet absorption was needed for Jesus' own sake in order to overcome every doubt, to make sure that he could carry out his great mission. His life questions must be settled once for all. The Jews were filled and thrilled with expectations of the kingdom of God as an outward, political kingdom, an independent nation standing at the head of the world, a king more splendid than Solomon in all his glory, with triumph over all enemies, with peace, plenty, prosperity, and all the glories of the Messianic times as foretold by the prophets. On what method should Jesus decide? Was he to fulfil the expectation of the Jews? The real battle was fought on the battlefield of the soul, where are fought the greatest battles of all time.

IV. THE THREE GREAT TEMPTATIONS, Matt. 4:3-11. In actual wars it sometimes happens that when the enemy has been unsuccessful in every attack, and the campaign seems finished with the enemy finally put to rout, he gathers his forces, and all possible reserves, and makes one more desperate trial; hoping through the unexpectedness of the onslaught, and the weariness of his opponent, to turn the tide and win the victory.

So in this moral battle, after the 40 days of battling, the tempter gathers his forces together, and makes three most vigorous attempts to defeat the Son of God.

The Tempter was Satan, the adversary, a real being. He is the leader, the chief of evil spirits. It is no more unreasonable to believe in a personal devil than in bad men, bad leaders on earth. He is the embodiment of all the forces of evil. Denying the existence of the devil lays much heavier charges of evil on the nature of man than does the belief in Satan.

In what form the tempter came to Jesus we do not know. "My own impression," says Dr. Boardman, "is that Satan came to him in a guise hardly distinguishable from his own mental operations." This is most probably true of the 40 days' battle in the wilderness, whether he made a personal appearance before Jesus during the three great battles or not.

One thing we do know, and this is that he was tempted "like as we are." And this assures us of several things.

1. Satan could not have come as Satan, as Apollyon to Bunyan's Pilgrim, with horrible form and flaming breath; for he does not tempt us in that way. Such an appearance would drive us away, not attract us. "If the devil had to travel with uncovered face, only devils would follow him." — *Ram's Horn*.

2. If he came in bodily form at all it must have been as an angel of light, or "in the guise of a friendly stranger, with gracious manner and plausible speech."

3. It was no sham fight, but a real battle. He could have yielded.

Jesus had fasted 40 days, during which time he had been too much absorbed to think of his hunger. Now he comes to the end of the campaign, relaxes his attention upon his mental struggles, and the tide of hunger rolled back upon him as a flood. This was Satan's psychological moment. This hunger was like the fresh reserves the enemy calls into the fight.

3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

The First Temptation, vs. 3, 4. Almost fainting with hunger, Jesus seems to the tempter an easy prey, and Satan says to him, — **If thou be the Son of God, as you have been claiming through these 40 days, command that these stones be made bread, and so satisfy your hunger.** If you are the Son of God you have the power; and satisfying one's natural hunger with so simple a thing as bread is surely right.

But the wrong was not in the mere act of satisfying his hunger, but the doing it in such a way as to destroy his power to help the tempted, for had he done so he would not have been tempted like as we are. Moreover, as to his Messiahship, it would have gained him an outward victory at the expense of a real spiritual victory.

How Did Jesus Gain the Victory? By the same weapon which is given to us, — the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." **Man shall not live by bread alone** (Deut. 8:3), he quoted. God can and will give food in his own time and way. There are other and better ways of satisfying hunger than by wrongdoing. There is something higher, better, more needful than earthly food, even obedience, faith, love, character, righteousness.

The Second Temptation, vs. 5-7. Satan having failed in his first attack, changes his tactics. From the lonely wilderness, where no one can see or know what Jesus was doing, he **taketh him up**, either in spirit or in vision, **into the holy city, Jerusalem, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple**, "some part of the temple overhanging a precipice." — *Exp. Gk. Test.* It probably looked down at a less depth into the court of the temple. Jesus could imagine the dramatic scene it would make, — the vast crowds in the temple court, all looking up at the strange vision, and ready for the marvel.

6. **If thou be the Son of God**, — again appearing to throw doubt on the fact, — prove it to yourself and to the people. Take the course which will make the people receive you as the Messiah. **Cast thyself down** into the court of the temple, into the midst of the worshipping crowds, and you will be welcomed as prophet and king.

Satan assures him that to do this is perfectly safe, since he has been promised full protection, — **in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.** (Quoted from Ps. 91:10-12.)

"Thus it was that the Tempter came again to Jesus with the suggestion: 'Since you feel sure that God will take care of you according to his promises, test his loving readiness to do this. Do not doubt him, but put his promise to the proof. He has said that his angels shall have charge of you. Now throw yourself from the Temple's pinnacle, and let all who watch you see that you are borne up by God's spiritual messengers, so that you are kept from bodily harm.' — *H. C. Trumbull, in Duty Knowing.*

7. Jesus won the victory by a right use of the weapon Satan had used against him, — the simple statement that the act was wrong; and no right cause can succeed through wrongdoing. He found his answer in the Bible. **Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.** Thou shalt not twist and misapply a promise, and then demand that it be fulfilled in your own way or else you will proclaim that God is untrue.

"He was willing to face peril of death, when God willed that he should do so." He will leap from a pinnacle or face the Roman legions, or go to the cross, if God wills. But he refuses to do it because any one dares him to.

8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ;

9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

The Third Temptation, vs. 8-11. This was Satan's masterpiece. He took Jesus up, probably in vision or imagination, as there is no mountain from which can be seen with the natural eye **all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them**.

The Proposal. 9. **All these things will I give thee**. I will withdraw my opposition, as "the prince of this world." I will use all my influence and power to make you the greatest worldly king, like Alexander or Cæsar. Your hopes shall be realized ; you shall make of the world whatever you desire it to be. Thus Satan appealed to the noblest feelings and purest aspirations of Jesus, offering him, apparently, at once, without waiting long centuries for wrongs to cease, the very things he had come to this world to gain. This method of gaining the kingdom was the one the Jews desired and expected.

The Condition, v. 9. In the midst of the glorious vision, which presented itself with great beauty to the eyes of Jesus, he hears the condition, — **All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me**. Not necessarily worship me as a god, but do homage to me as your over-lord and master ; rule in my way, to suit me and my purposes.

The Victory, vs. 10, 11. When Satan revealed the condition on which this glorious vision could be realized, then he himself stood forth in his true devilish nature, as if touched with Ithuriel's spear, in Milton's picture of the temptation in the Garden of Eden, — the spear that made whomsoever it touched throw off all disguises and stand forth in his true nature.

And Jesus at once answers, — *Begone*. **Get thee hence, Satan : for it is written (Deut. 6 : 13), Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve**. He is the one chief ruler of the universe, and there is no other way than serving him truly of gaining the true kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

11. **Then the devil leaveth him**, the battle is finally won ; the terrific assaults are beaten back ; and Jesus remains the victor on the field, but still more worn and weary because of what he has just gone through. Then, **behold, angels came and ministered unto him**. Gave him food, as in the case of Elijah (1 King 19 : 5) ; and at the same time companionship, sympathy, and the assurance that God and heaven were on his side.

V. THE APPEAL OF APPETITE, PRIDE, AND AMBITION. These three temptations present the three greatest appeals that can be made to a human soul.

1. *Appetite*, — not only the desire for food, but "the desire for gratification of some want, craving, or passion, that is natural or acquired."

Our bodies and our souls are full of desires, appetites, hungers, which are innocent in themselves, but which we are tempted to gratify in wrong ways, in Satan's ways, in contradistinction to God's ways. This is the essence of most sins of the flesh, which work disease and death, as intemperance, gluttony, and social vices.

2. *Pride*, — not merely "the excess of self-esteem," but the desire that others shall take us at our own valuation, and the determination to force them to do so if possible. It is the pride shown in flaunting our riches, or power, or beauty in the face of the world, by such a display as shall force them to acknowledge our superiority. In Jesus' case it was the temptation to win men to his side by a spectacular display.

3. *Ambition*, — the "consuming desire to achieve some object or purpose." There are laudable ambitions, — the desire to acquire learning, to be rich in good works, etc., — but it is not of these we think first when we speak of the ambitious man. There have been men whose ambition was so great that they strove to o'er-top the world, to bring it under their sway, and make it subservient to their wishes. Their desire consumed all righteous principles, and love for their neighbor ; even all justice and all rights belonging to those in their path.

Xerxes, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and others are examples in ancient history. Napoleon Bonaparte is the most notable example in modern history ; but there is one to-day whom history when it is written may class with Napoleon, — not in his success, but in his desire, and the ruthlessness of the means he took to obtain it.

VI. THE OVERCOMING OF TEMPTATION. It is through victory over temptation that the soul "builds itself larger mansions." Men gain victories only through battles. They cultivate courage through things that test courage. They grow in faith through things that try their faith. They learn business by taking the risks of business. People without trials and temptations are always failures.

The reason is that every temptation not only presents a man with an opportunity for choice, but compels him to make the choice. And choice is an act of will, and character is made by acts of will.

"In physical things temptation, trial, risk, are essential to the best training. One will never learn to swim after the good old lady's formula, 'Yes, my dear, of course you must learn to swim, but don't go near the water.'

"No one ever became a great commander in time of peace." And the greatest battles, the greatest victories, the greatest heroes, are found in connection with overcoming temptation. Marathon, Thermopylæ, Waterloo, pale before the great spiritual battles of the world.

In the barber shop of a hotel in Washington this inscription is said to have been written on the mirror : "*There is no pleasure in life equal to that of the conquest of a vicious habit.*"

Why then pray, Lead us not into temptation ? Because whosoever wishes to be tempted is already fallen, and only seeks the best way to gain his desires. In *The Gospel According to the Enemy*, it is said of Judas that "he looked around for doors opening into hell, and of course he found them."

"Temptation is not an uncommon thing. God has not willed to keep us from temptation, but He does will to keep us from being mastered by it." — *Len G. Broughton*.

"There are only two centers in the universe, death and life. Every victory of the devil is a victory for death ; every conquest by Christ is a triumph of life. With every act of our lives we move towards either the death-center or the life-center. . . . There are two cups offered to us in every time of temptation ; one of poison, one of the water of life. Thanks be to God, our every choice is not a final one ; but with every choice of poison the system is weakened."

LESSON III. — October 17.

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY. — Matt. 4:12-25.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Repent ye ; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* — MATT. 4:17.

Devotional Reading : Isaiah 61.

Additional Material for Teachers : Mark 1:16-20 ; Luke 5:1-11.

Primary Topic : JESUS CHOOSES HELPERS.

Lesson Material : Matt. 4:18-25.

Memory Verse : They left all, and followed him. Luke 5:11.

Junior Topic : JESUS TEACHING AND HEALING.

Lesson Material : Matt. 4:12-25.

Memory Verse : Matt. 4:23.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES.

Additional Material : Matt. 9:9 ; John 1:43.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE KING BEGINS HIS MINISTRY.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The lesson for to-day will be almost entirely a study of the facts and events

recorded in the portion of the Gospels selected. The fact that Jesus chose helpers to carry on his work, and the fact that to-day he also calls all his

followers to help him to carry it on, can be commented on in each grade, as also our answer to the call, and the part we can do in the work.

The Young People and Adults may find additional interest in the discussion of Jesus' attitude toward his mission, his understanding of it, and the extent to which his humanity limited his knowledge of the real divinity of his mission.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time.—This second year of Jesus' ministry began in March, A.D. 28, the lesson of to-day belonging in April or May of that year.

Place.—The year was spent in Galilee. This lesson was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum, which he now made his home.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Why did Matthew not record the first year of Jesus' ministry?

Name some of the things Jesus did during the year in Judea.

Why was Galilee the best place for promoting his larger work?

What acquaintance had these four disciples with Jesus already?

To what did Jesus now call them?

How would their being fishermen help them in work for Christ?

Why did Jesus perform so many miracles of healing?

How far are his methods adaptable to our times?

How does God call us to our life-work for him?

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Matthew, and on the parallel portions of Mark and Luke. Books on the Life of Christ.

On Galilee, see *Studies in Galilee* by E. W. S. Masterman, M.D., F.R.S., of Jerusalem; *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, by Prof. G. A. Smith; *Bible Dictionaries*.

The Apostles as Every Day Men, by Robert S. Thompson. Vance's *College of the Apostles*. Bruce's *Training of the Twelve*. Stalker's *The Two St. Johns of the New Testament*.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Call to Work for Christ.

- I. THE FIRST YEAR OF JESUS' MINISTRY, John 1-4.
- II. JESUS PREACHING THE GOSPEL, vs. 12-17.
- III. THE GREAT DRAUGHT OF FISHES, Luke 5:1-11.
- IV. FISHERS OF MEN, vs. 18-22.
- V. JESUS TEACHING AND HEALING, vs. 23-25.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Twice-born Men, by Harold Begbie. John Keble's *Christian Year*, "Fishers of Men." Dinah Maria Mulock Craik's *Poems*, "The Draught of Fishes." Whittier's "Our Master."

THE LESSON IN ART.

Miraculous Draught of Fishes, Jouvenet, Raphael,* Doré, Van Dyck.

Call of the Four, Basaiti, Ghirlandajo,* Zimmerman.*

Christ Healing the Sick, Hofmann,* West, Schönherr.*

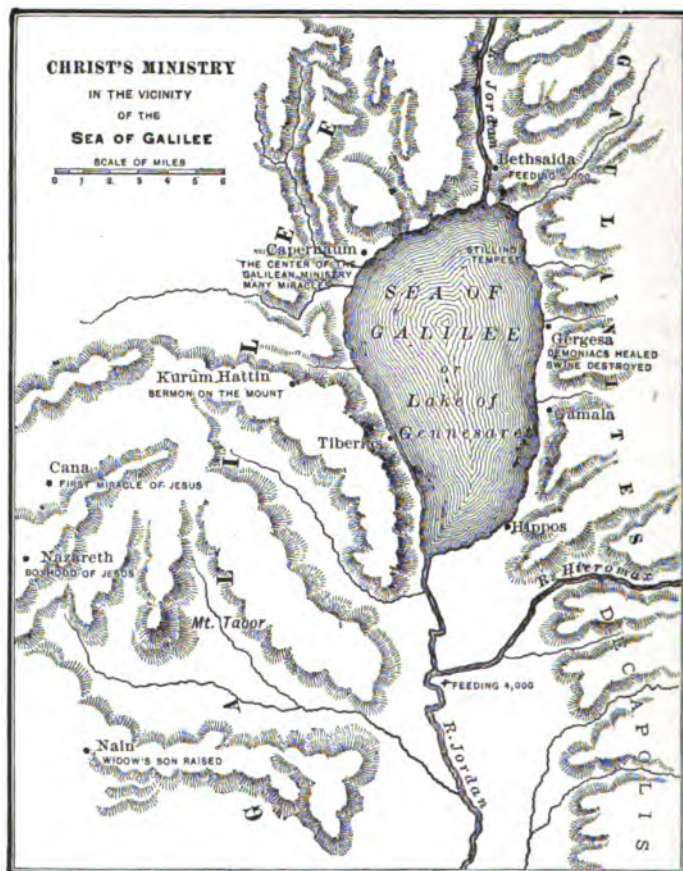
I. THE FIRST YEAR OF JESUS' MINISTRY, John 1-4. Between verses 11 and 12 of the fourth chapter of Matthew, — verse 11 telling of the ending of the temptation, and verse 12 telling of the imprisonment of John the Baptist and the beginning of the work of Jesus in Galilee, — belongs more than a year of the ministry of Jesus. Why? Principally because Matthew would have his record that of an eye-witness, from personal observation. He was a resident of Capernaum, which city Jesus made the central point of his Galilean ministry. Matthew saw many of the miracles Jesus did, and heard much of his teaching before he became a disciple. He mingled with the people, he could know and talk with those who were healed of disease and those whose lives were changed. He was familiar with the manners and customs of the Galileans. Others could testify to what they knew in Judea; Matthew would write of what he knew in Galilee.

Another reason for beginning the record of Jesus' ministry at the point where Matthew begins it, is that at this time his disciples began to be permanently with him, and they could report what they themselves had seen and heard. This would be the case even with these four, who had first followed him immediately after his return from the Wilderness of the Temptation.

The Year of Beginnings. This first year was spent largely in Judea. It was natural that Jesus should begin his work in the central home of the religion of the

12. Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

Old Testament which contained the prophecies of the Messiah. But the work went on very slowly. It was difficult to get any momentum. This was partly due to the fact that in Judea were the most active formal religionists, all of whom were opposed to the sort of gospel which Jesus preached. Had he come to them as a splendid



earthly king, as he was tempted in the wilderness to do, — the miracle worker for personal, earthly ends, — he would have made more progress. But he preached repentance to those who considered themselves models of righteousness for all mankind. And he was poor and humble, claiming nothing of the glory of a king.

Résumé of the Events of the First Year.

1. The First Disciples, John 1:35-51.
2. The First Miracle: the Wedding at Cana, John 2:1-12.
3. The First Reform: the Cleansing of the Temple, John 2:13-25.
4. The First Recorded Discourse: to Nicodemus, John 3:1-21.
5. The First Preaching Tour, John 3:22-36.
6. The First Converts in Samaria: Jacob's Well, John 4:1-42.
7. The First Recorded Healing: the Nobleman's Son, John 4:43-54.

II. **JESUS PREACHING THE GOSPEL**, vs. 12-17. When Jesus had heard that John the Baptist was cast into prison, in March, A.D. 28, he departed into

13. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15. The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16. The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

17. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Galilee, either, as most of the commentators say, because he saw that it was no longer safe for him to remain in Judea, or as some think, because he wished to take up and enlarge the work which John was obliged to lay down.

13. **And leaving Nazareth**, because, as we learn from Luke 4: 16-31, his townsmen rejected him and tried to kill him. This wrong Providence caused to work out good, for Nazareth was not the best situation for his headquarters, nor were his relatives and friends the best material for his first converts. **Dwelt in Capernaum**. Probably because "Capernaum, more than any other city in Palestine, with the single exception of Jerusalem, was a centre of commerce, travel, and especially of news. . . . Sailors, soldiers, merchants, travellers, princes, men of every class and from many parts of the world, passed through this place on business or pleasure. . . . Christ's gospel was for all the world, and here were messengers from the east, the west, and the south, who would carry tidings of what they had seen to their distant homes." — *Hon. Selah Merrill*.

14-16. Matthew says that this move was made that **it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias, Isaiah, the prophet** (Isa. 9: 1, 2). That is, either the prophet divinely saw that this was the right thing to do at this time, and therefore foretold it, and therefore Jesus did it; or Jesus had come to circumstances when the same reasons applied, as to the times when the prophecy was uttered. The territory spoken of was the northernmost tribes toward the Sea of Galilee, where the great eastern roads entered the country beyond Jordan, **Galilee of the nations**, the portions of Galilee adjoining the heathen nations.

There is a very close parallel between spiritual darkness and the darkness of disaster and calamity. When this prophecy was written by Isaiah this region was in the deepest darkness. The Assyrian hordes were ravaging their lands. Homes and farm lands were devastated by the most cruel and savage soldiery. Great multitudes were carried away captive and slain (see 2 Kings 15: 29-16: 9).

But even in his day Isaiah saw that this outward trouble and darkness were but a symbol of the spiritual darkness of sin and ruin of souls; and that their deliverance from this darkness was also coming through his promised Messiah. And now that Messiah, Saviour, Redeemer, had come. The dawning rays were shining upon the people.

Galilee was in several ways a better field for this work than was Judea. It was covered with roads everywhere, to every part of the known world. It was his boyhood's home, and he was familiar with the characteristics of the land and its people. With natural bodily vigor, with mental freshness, they were a moral, intelligent, industrious people. They were more worldly, but less bound to the old order and ideas and traditions of the scribes than were the people of Judea. It was a business country, full of varied activities, — manufactures, fisheries, exports of oil and fruits. It was a most rich and fruitful country. "In many ways it was the most hopeful field in all Palestine for gaining a foothold and reception for the new kingdom of God."

17. **From that time**, the time when, after the imprisonment of John the Baptist and Jesus' making his home in Capernaum, **Jesus began to preach**, to proclaim the news which he had come to earth to tell. He preached in every possible method by which he could reach the hearts of men. He proclaimed to great crowds; he taught small classes; he conversed with individuals. He sowed the good seed in public gatherings indoors, out of doors, by the wayside, in upper rooms, in the synagogues. He preached to rich and to poor, to publicans and sinners, to Pharisees and rulers. He taught by every form of speech, by plain truths, by arguments, by parables and

stories, by illustrations, by telling what he had seen and known with his Father, by gentlest persuasions, and when needed, by sharp warnings, and "woes."

But the theme was always

Repent : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!

This is the same message as John brought (Matt. 3 : 2) only from more heavenly lips, with brighter light, with clearer vision, with fuller help.

There was then, and still is, no possible way of reaching the blessedness of the kingdom of God except by fulfilling the essential condition of repentance of sin, turning away from it, hating it, forsaking it.

"All men need to repent. We never can reach the gates of heaven unless we repent. The prodigal son had to rise and leave the far country, and walk back all the way to his father's house, before he could be restored to favor and be at home again. That is what every impenitent man must do. The first step in coming to Christ is repentance.

"Some persons imagine that if they are sorry for doing wrong, they have repented. Tears of penitence will not blot out sin. Repentance is ceasing to make blots on the record, and beginning to live a pure, clean white life." — J. R. Miller, D.D., in *Devotional Hours with the Bible*.

"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live." — *Ezekiel 18 : 31, 32*.

The New Life Unfolding. Rev. F. B. Meyer has related the following incident which once took place at a Northfield summer conference, after he had been preaching in the morning.

"In the afternoon he [Mr. Moody] appeared with a young apple tree which he had uprooted from his garden, and commenced the following conversation with his brother, whom he had brought to the hall for the purpose, and who is a practical gardener :

"Erecting the young apple tree on the platform, and propping it up with one hand, he asked :

"'Would this stock produce apples?'

"'No; it is a young forest sapling.'

"'How, then, did you get these apples?'

"'We ingrafted the slip of an apple tree.'

"'How did you graft?'

"'We made the incision with a knife and inserted the apple graft.'

"'Well, what next?'

"'All the sap and strength of the sapling began to pour into the graft.'

"'Turning to me, Mr. Moody said before all the people :

"'Is not that something like regeneration, when Christ comes into our heart and our life begins to flow through him?'

"'Questioning his brother again, he said :

"'Supposing there come shoots under the graft, would they not divert the strength of the tree?'

"'Certainly; they must be cut off.'

"'Supposing you cut them off once, will they come again?'

"'There is always a tendency to do so; but, for the most part, if you cut a shoot off three times in the same place, it will not trouble you again there, but the old stock will probably break out in another place lower down; and, when you have thoroughly dealt with that, it will break out lower down again.'

"'Turning to me, Mr. Moody said :

"'Is not that like our old nature, perpetually striving to get the mastery? There is nothing for it but to let the Holy Spirit deal with it.'"

III. THE GREAT DRAUGHT OF FISHES, Luke 5 : 1-11. This account in Luke belongs between verses 17 and 18 of our lesson. Jesus was preaching to the people by the side of the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum. So many gathered to hear him, and pressed so closely upon him, that he was hidden from the sight, and even from the hearing, of many of the crowd. He therefore entered one of the fishing boats that were moored to the shore near by, and pushing out a little into the water, was easily heard and seen by those on the land.

18. And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

20. And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

21. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

"At the north end of the Lake of Gennesaret [Sea of Galilee] there are small creeks, or inlets, where the ship could ride in safety only a few feet from the shore, and where the multitudes, seated on both sides and before the boat, could listen without distraction or fatigue. As if on purpose to furnish seats, the shores on both sides of these narrow inlets are piled up with smooth bundles of basalt."—*Thomson, Land and Book.*

The boat in which he sat belonged to Simon Peter. He and his brother Andrew had been fishing all night without success. Now they were cleaning and mending their nets for the next night's work. Jesus said, "Put out into the deep, and let down your net at once for a draught of fishes, instead of waiting for the night."

Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all last night, the best time for fishing as you well know, and we caught nothing at all. Still, as you tell me to let down my net, I will do so." And to the astonishment of all the net inclosed so many fishes that it came near to breaking, and Simon and Andrew were obliged to summon their partners, James and John, to come in another boat and help them.

IV. **FISHERS OF MEN**, vs. 18-22. With great wisdom Jesus selected this moment, while they were wondering at their success, to call these four disciples to leave their business and follow him. They had a year before chosen him as their Master (John 1: 35-42); they had been with him during a part of the time already (John 2: 1-12); but they had probably not realized that to serve him as fully as he wished they must be prepared to leave all, and to do so at an instant's notice. Basing the call on the miracle they had just seen, **Jesus saith unto them**, Simon Peter and Andrew, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men** (v. 19). **And they straightway . . . followed him** (v. 20). They did not hesitate a moment, although their business seemed just now to have become unusually successful.

21. **And . . . he saw . . . James . . . and John his brother . . . and he called them.** These left their father as well as their business. It is probable that their share in the business partnership was larger than that of Andrew and Simon, as they had a larger boat which contained their father and servants besides the two brothers.

It will help us to understand the call, and to gain lessons for our own lives, if we become better acquainted with these four men.

They all belonged in this region by the Lake; were all fishermen.

Peter was the name Jesus gave as a prophecy to Simon Bar-Jonah, or in English, Simon Johnson. But he became Peter, *i.e.* Rockman, so that in his later years and through all after time he is only Peter. He was originally hot-headed, impulsive,



Jesus Preaching from Peter's Boat.

Hofmann.

fearless of consequences ; but he had initiative, boldness, leadership. "The Church with him as leader would never perish of rust."

Andrew, his brother, was a man of business wisdom. When Jesus fed the 5000 he was on the Committee of Ways and Means.

James seems to have been the older of these two brothers, and the captain of his boat, for in the Gospels and the Acts he is always mentioned first. John seems to have been quite young. These two were of strong character and strong feelings. Jesus called them "Boanerges," "sons of thunder." But John became the very embodiment of love. James was the first martyr among the Twelve.

All four disciples made their life choice at this time. It was the parting of the ways. They chose that way which, amid many hardships and trials, led upward to blessings inconceivable to them at the time.

"Following the Best Lead." What if James and John, with approved business sagacity, had replied to the invitation of the Master : 'Can't you see that it is obviously impossible for us to leave our nets ? Business is business, and it must come first.' They certainly did not realize the uniqueness of the opportunity that had come to them in the voice of Jesus. They could not see ahead. But they were willing to follow the best that beckoned. They put religion above revenue, belief above business, the prophet above profits. They saw a gleam of new life and by following it they became transformed and transformers. Christians to-day are being confronted with a crisis which means as much to them as the call meant to the Galilean fishermen. New summonses to new service in many ways are being sounded by Providence. The man who lets his own material entanglements hold now is deaf to the higher call of the hour." — *Ellis Lessson Service.*

"You cannot follow one thing without coming away from something else. . . . If you are moving onward, some things must be left behind. What are 'the things which are behind' in your life ?" — *Frances Ridley Havergal.*

Fishers of Men. 1. The call was to a higher service. They were already believers in Jesus ; this was the call to work with him.

2. The call came while they were faithfully performing their daily tasks. It is to those who are faithful in the least that the greater work is given.

3. All their work, the skill they attained, their acquaintance with it, and with their surroundings, was preparing them for this higher work.

4. To be a good fisherman one needs to learn his business, to train himself in skill, and especially to learn about the habits and nature of the fish. So the teacher needs to train himself for his work, and especially to study child nature. Peter was more than two years with Jesus, learning his truths and studying his methods before he realized the promise in his first great ingathering of men at Pentecost.

5. There are many ways of fishing for men, — one can fish for large masses, with the net, preaching, teaching a Sunday School class, speaking in prayer meeting, teaching in day schools, making public addresses ; and one can fish for them one by one, — taking them apart and winning them to Christ. This way is better for many individuals.

6. The fisherman attracts fish, he cannot drive them. There must be good bait, an appeal to something that is wanted, to some longing or hope, or consciousness of need. No mere outside attractions will draw men into the Christian life. There must be something deeper, that will appeal to men in the time of temptation, and when all the foundations of their life seem tottering.

7. The net or the line is useless without a person behind it. Even the printed word is comparatively weak without the living presence of one filled with its spirit.

8. We should train ourselves for this work, for it requires great skill, patient toil, continual watchfulness, and all the wisdom God has promised to those who ask. But all can do the work in some way, in some place, by some method, if only they seek with their whole heart.

9. What Can the Children Do ? They can invite their mates to Sunday School, to children's meetings like the Christian Endeavor, Epworth League, Baptist Union, Pastor's Classes. They can be organized in their classes for this work. They can show a Christian spirit. They can help make their Sunday School class and young people's meetings interesting. They can help others in many kindly ways.

V. JESUS TEACHING AND HEALING, vs. 23-25. These verses are a summary of which chapters 5-9 give a detailed account, showing his "varied, extensive, and far-famed work." He went about all Galilee. This was his first regular tour of the country. Teaching. Instructing, interpreting the Scriptures, guiding the

23. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

24. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

understanding, showing the truths of God. **In their synagogues.** The Jewish churches of that day, where any distinguished teacher could speak. **Preaching.** Heralding, proclaiming the gospel, the good news from God, of, concerning, the kingdom, the Messiah's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven.

Then follows a series of acts of kindness and power which made clear as the sun in the sky the love of God their Father, and his desire for their entire redemption, — **healing all manner of sickness . . . among the people.**

24, 25. **And his fame went throughout all Syria . . . and there followed him great multitudes.** "Imagine, if you can, the condition of a country in which there are no doctors, where the healing art is only practised by a few quacks, who rely more on charms than on physic for their cures." Then "picture the eager excitement when the news spread that there is a good physician arrived in town; that he has healed a fierce demoniac by a word, and a great fever by a touch."

Such was the condition of Palestine and the surrounding country in our Lord's day, and such was the condition not only there but in many other countries before the coming of our missionaries to the help of the people. The need is still enormous, as one can easily learn by reading the interesting reports of our medical missionaries.

Jesus Christ is living now, and working as really as when on earth; and in the same directions. He promised his disciples that they should do greater things than He did in Palestine. And this promise has proved true (1) in the number and greatness of the conversions of individuals. (2) In the great moral changes of whole nations. (3) In the physical blessings which he is working through His disciples. Public and private institutions spring up everywhere under the influence of Christianity, as herbs and flowers under the genial influence of the spring time. They do not work miracles, but are better than the power of miracles, as the prolonged sunshine is better than a flash of lightning.

LESSON IV. — October 24.

WHAT THE KING REQUIRES. — Matthew 5.

PRINT Matt. 5:1-10, 48-48.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* — MATT. 5:48.

Devotional Reading : Luke 6:27-38.

Additional Material for Teachers : Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:4, 5; Luke 6:20-38.

Primary Topic : WHAT THE HEAVENLY FATHER WANTS US TO BE.

Lesson Material : Matt. 5:7-9.

Memory Verse : Blessed are the pure in heart. Matt. 5:8.

Junior Topic : WHAT JESUS WISHES HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE.

Lesson Material : Matt. 5:1-16.

Memory Verse : Matt. 5:8.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : MEASURING UP TO CHRIST'S STANDARD.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE CHARACTER WHICH JESUS REQUIRES.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

The first requisite of one who would have a successful life, as of the Pilot of a ship, is a knowledge of its goal. No helmsman however skilled would be trusted to guide a vessel until he knew and could specify in what directions he should go. "The one true port is the kingdom of heaven and a knowledge of the goal, of the direction, and of the work to be done, is essential to success."

The real subject of this lesson is the same in every class. The application of the subject, however, will necessarily differ according to the capacity of the scholar. In all grades we study the ideal which Jesus gave for the character of his followers. The **Primary** children will find all they can grasp in a single lesson in the three verses which are set for them, and their application to the life of a child. The **Juniors** can take all the Beatitudes, and translate them into practical terms for their own characters.

In the **Intermediate** and **Senior** classes the physical examination for "making the teams" at school or college, or for enlistment in the army so short a time ago, can be used as an illustration of measuring up to the standard of Christ's ideal character. Do people generally measure up to it? Do I?

In the classes for **Young People** and **Adults** the time will be well spent in a study and discussion of Christ's teachings through the Gospels, and reflected in the words of the apostles, showing what an all-round Christian character really means, and how far Christians as a rule measure up to it.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time.—The summer of A.D. 28, toward the middle of Jesus' ministry; after he had gained a considerable following, and had proved by word and deed his rightful authority as a teacher.

Place.—The Horns of Hattin, on the

west side of the Sea of Galilee, according to a probable tradition.

THE ROUND TABLE**FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.**

The events immediately preceding the Sermon on the Mount.

Why did Jesus spend the whole night in prayer?

Why did Jesus choose his permanent apostles at this time?

In what respects was this a real epoch in Jesus' ministry?

The Beatitudes the ideal and goal of true living.

How are they practical for us to-day?

Compare the world's idea of happiness with Christ's idea.

Which are the most important Beatitudes? the hardest?

Perfection as the goal of living.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: Measuring Up to Christ's Standard.

- I. THE SITUATION, Matt. 5:1, 2; Luke 6:12-20.
- II. THE GREAT CHARTER OF THE KINGDOM, Matt. 5:3-12.
- III. SOME LAWS OF THE KINGDOM, Matt. 5:13-42.
- IV. THE IDEAL AND GOAL OF TRUE LIVING, Matt. 5:43-48.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Matthew. Works on the Beatitudes, especially *Blessed Are Ye*, by Rev. F. B. Meyer, D.D.; *The Master's Blesseds*, by Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D.; *The Beatitudes*, by Rev. John Peat; *The Beatitudes*, by Rev. John S. B. Monsell, LL.D.; *The Great Charter of Christ*, by Bishop W. Boyd Carpenter. *Laws of Christ for Common Life*, by Rev. R. W. Dale, LL.D. *Law of Love and Love as Law*, by Pres. Mark Hopkins, LL.D. Prof. Shailer Mathews' *The Social Teaching of Jesus*. *The Wonder of His Gracious Words*, by Rev. J. Edgar Park. *Studies in Mountain Instruction*, by Rev. William Burnet Wright, D.D.

1. AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

I. THE SITUATION, Matt. 5:1, 2; Luke 6:12-20. *The All-Night Prayer.* From Luke we learn that this new epoch in the development of Christ's kingdom was, like all other crises in his life, preceded and ushered in by a night of special prayer. Compare Luke 3:21, 22; Mark 1:35; John 6:15.

The Selection of the Twelve Apostles was made the next morning, when Jesus came down from the Mount. Several of these had been following Jesus more or less regularly. Now after this testing of them, he selected twelve to be continually under his

2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

training for their great work. They were to be both disciples, that is, learners, students, and apostles, that is, persons sent forth to carry on his mission. Their names are given in Matt. 10, when they were first sent forth on a tour by themselves. See Lesson VIII.

The Mount of Beatitudes. By the time Jesus had finished the choosing of the Twelve Apostles a great throng had gathered around him, not only the Twelve, but other disciples to what number we do not know, and many who were not as yet his followers, but had come through interest or curiosity to hear the great preacher. Jesus seated himself, according to the custom of Jewish speakers, on an elevation somewhat above the rest, and his voice would carry far in that quiet air. The Twelve were certainly in the foreground.

The hill known today as "the Horns of Hattin" has "a summit which closely resembles an Oriental saddle with its two high peaks. On the west it rises very little



From an Underwood Stereograph.

Traditional Bethsaida.

The Sea of Galilee and the Horns of Hattin in the distance.

above the level of a broad and undulating plain ; on the east it sinks precipitately toward a plateau, on which lies immediately beneath the cliffs, the village of Hattin ; and from this plateau the traveller descends through a wild and tropic gorge to the shining levels of the Lake of Galilee. It is the only conspicuous hill on the western side of the lake, and it is singularly adapted by its conformation, both to form a place for short retirement and a rendezvous for gathering multitudes." — *Farrar*.

II. THE GREAT CHARTER OF THE KINGDOM, Matt. 5 : 3-12. The Sermon on the Mount has been well called the Great Charter of the Kingdom of God ; and the Beatitudes are the text of the Sermon. The laws in this Charter are not arbitrary enactments, but belong to the eternal nature of God. They cannot be changed ; no man can be really and permanently happy unless he fulfils the conditions given here.

Each consists of a promise, a condition, and a statement of the specific blessing, growing out of the moral qualities named in the condition.

In studying the Beatitudes, note :

1. That each Beatitude is the natural successor of the one that precedes it.
2. That the particular form of blessedness in each is that which grows out of the particular moral quality named.
3. The blessedness is more than "happiness," the joy that happens to us, comes to us from without ; it is the joy that grows out of the soul itself, a part of its very nature, increased by happy outward surroundings and perfect only in them as in heaven, but indestructible by any outward power.
4. We must distinguish between working for the reward as wages, as the chief end and purpose ; and the striving for the virtues and courses of action of which the rewards are the blossoms and the fruits.

3. Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

5. The Beatitudes "are the very essence and pith of genuine manhood. It is the fashion to talk about 'muscular Christianity.' I will declare what requires Christian muscle — it is living up to the Beatitudes. . . . The conquering forces in Christ's kingdom, for time and for eternity, are precisely these beatific graces."

6. It is through the Beatitudes that the world is to be reformed.

7. Both for individuals and for the world, the Beatitudes are disturbing, overturning, revolutionary. "In the day of Christ and down to this hour, the earth has

been in the hands of those who had the ability to take and keep — not in the hands of the merciful, the meek, or the peace-makers. Strong, dominant, masterful natures have held power in this world, and have administered its resources. Cunning, finesse, brute force, pride, revenge, greed, egoistic impulses, have made good their title to actual possession. . . .

"But the Beatitudes and the whole tenor of Christian prophecy, of which they are a part, predict that in the revolutions of time the sceptre is destined to pass to other qualities and characters. . . . These false standards will have to come down; these battle flags will have to be furled and hung up. . . . Surely the Beatitudes must one day be crowned and throned, and the ideal become the normal and actual." — *Rev. J. S. Jones, D.D.*

And this has been even more the faith of Christians during the closing months of the great World War and the armistice. The aims of the Allies to make the world safe for democracy and the small nations; the new but vital kind of religion we have found in the trenches; the self-denial and generosity which have been almost forced upon us by public opinion,



The Sermon on the Mount.

Hofmann.

— all seem to us the precursors of a new day, when Christianity shall have been purified of the traditions of men, and shall follow more clearly and closely the true teachings of its Master, Jesus Christ.

THE FIRST BEATITUDE, v. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit. This is not poverty of mental faculties or gifts. It is no mean abject feeling, no Uriah Heep's 'umbleness, no want of self-respect, no apologizing for one's existence, no cringing before men. Nor is it mere poverty in this world's goods, though it may be easier for a poor man to acquire it. One may be "poor and proud." It is the consciousness of sin and need. It is the consciousness that all we have is the gift of God.

For their's is the kingdom of heaven. Why? Because they have the same spirit that is required when we are told that we must become as little children if we would enter that kingdom. It is the exact opposite of pride, self-righteousness, and self-conceit. Such belong to the kingdom, they are ruled by its laws and principles, have entered the door through which they can reach the heavenly character.

"The 'poor in spirit' are the people who lack and yearn for the things of the spirit. They never feel so rich in possession as they are in prospect. There is always something ahead which makes all their present attainment seem poor. What-

4. Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
5. Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

ever treasure they hold is dulled by the treasure which yet invites them. They are poor in spirit, and the Master gives this conscious sense of want the place of first beatitude. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The sense of want is the key to possession. The continued sense of want is the condition of progressive possession. The deeper the sense of lack, the greater is the assurance of acquisition. To behold the glory of that which is not yet won, to feel the lack of it, to confess the want of it, to know one's self poor before it, to long and aspire for it — that is the primary secret of all spiritual growth and progress, it is the key and clue to the Kingdom." — *Record of Christian Work*.

A Legend. "There is a beautiful legend which tells of a saintly man who was very greatly beloved by the angels, who had seen much of his godly life on the earth. The angels asked God to give to this man some new power, some mark of the divine favor, some new gift which would make him still more useful. They were told to see the man and ask him what special power he would like to have. He decided that he would choose to do a great deal of good among men without even knowing it. So it was that from that day his shadow, when it fell behind him, where he could not see it, had wondrous healing power; but when it fell before him, where he could see it, it had no such power.

"This is the spirit of true holiness — nothing for self, everything for God." — *Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D.*

SECOND BEATITUDE, v. 4. Blessed are they that mourn. Those that mourn over ignorance and sin, both in themselves and in others; over the sorrows of others; over the sins and needs of the world lying in wickedness; and so mourn that they repent of their sins, seek to overcome ignorance, and with all of their strength seek to save all men from their sins and the consequences of them. It is also an absolute promise to all those who in the kingdom of heaven, loving and serving God, are brought into the experience of mourning, and is to be interpreted by such passages as Rom. 5: 3-5; Heb. 12: 11.

For they shall be comforted. The Greek word for comfort here means *called to one's side* for aid, strength, encouragement, consolation. It is not the taking away altogether of sorrow, but transforming and transfiguring it, and compelling it to bestow blessings otherwise impossible. It is not so much soothing as strengthening, inspiring, invigorating. It is the imparting of courage and fresh life.

Each one shall be comforted according to that for which he mourns.

Those who mourn on account of their sins shall be comforted by sins forgiven, by deliverance from the power and consequences of sin.

Those who mourn over the sins and sorrows of the world shall be comforted by seeing the success of their efforts for the betterment of their fellow men.

Those who mourn their loved ones are comforted by the revelation of the blessedness of heaven, and the confident expectation that they shall see again those whom they "have loved long since and lost awhile."

It is only in the dark of the night that we can see the beauty of the stars. The darkening of many of our cities, either because of the danger from the enemy, or in order to save fuel, has given to many city-dwellers their first real view of the beauty and glory of the starry heavens.

In the immense amount of grief and mourning caused by the tragedies of the great World War has come much comfort. The thought that the men we have loved have died for the high purpose of making the world better and safer for those who shall come after them has buoyed up many a heart. Many have entered the service of their country on or near the battlefields, not to avenge their loved one, but to complete the work he was doing, for which he has given his life, — so that he shall not have died in vain.

A boy in the American army lost his life in the combat. His father mourned him; but showed his feelings by volunteering for the ambulance corps. He did not do it for revenge; he was not to be a combatant. He did it in order that he might do what he could to further the cause for which his boy had died.

THIRD BEATITUDE, v. 5. Blessed are the meek. "The men who suffer wrong without bitterness or desire for revenge." — *Exp. Grk. Test.* The *Century Dictionary* defines meek as "self-controlled and gentle; not easily provoked or irritated; for-

6. Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

bearing under injury or annoyance." This is meekness toward man. Webster defines meekness as "submission to the divine will: patience and gentleness from moral and religious motives," with the emphasis on the last words. This is meekness toward God. Its root lies in the control of all earthly tempers by the spirit. It implies great faith and great self-control. It is not a weak but an heroic quality. It is gentleness, patience, forgiveness, control of temper, submission to wrong, instead of retaliation.



Courtesy of A. S. Burbank, Plymouth, Mass.
Pilgrim Monument.

"Our forefathers builded better than they knew. They sought liberty only for themselves; others went beyond them and asserted liberty for all men."

shrewdness, but by the spiritual power of the meek, by the gospel of the meek and lowly Jesus.

"Perhaps the greatest historic fulfilment of this principle of Christ's is to be seen in the founding of the New World by the early Pilgrims. That is the most concrete example of the meekness that has in truth inherited the earth." — *J. Edgar Park*.

"The most war-like tribe of American Indians, as Parkman points out, practically exterminated itself by its wars." And we see how the desire to rule the world has brought down a strong and mighty nation in this twentieth century. We have not yet learned to rule our lives by this Beatitude.

FOURTH BEATITUDE, v. 6. **Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.** Hunger and thirst are the most intense passions; in their presence all other passions and longings are forgotten, so that a hungry Esau will sell any birthright for a mess of pottage.

In this Beatitude are included those who have this intense desire to be good, to be righteous; everything else — success, riches, pleasure, knowledge — must be as nothing in comparison with righteousness. This really includes every lesser good, in the only way in which the hunger and thirst for them can be satisfied. Without God and his righteousness, worldly things cannot satisfy the soul. They are like the waters of the sea, the more you drink the thirstier you are. Even the wants

Illustrations. A Brahmin compared a Christian missionary to a mango tree, pelted with clubs and stones, and in return freely yielding up its fruit, and the next year more fruitful than ever. This is Christian meekness, giving blessing for cursing.

Some little Belgian children were gathered together saying their evening prayer. They went through it without hesitation until they had said the words, "Forgive us our trespasses." There they stopped. After an instant's pause a man who was standing near to them took up the words and said, "As we forgive those who trespass against us." It was Albert, King of the Belgians!

For they shall inherit the earth. This earth. (1) They get the most out of the world and its good things. Passion and revenge are unhappy feelings. (2) The meek have a surer title to their earthly possessions; they are less likely to be dispossessed by enemies; they are apt to live longer than the passionate, the revengeful. (3) Christ's kingdom, whose members are characterized by meekness, is yet to possess the whole earth. The final and lasting conquest of the earth is not to be by force of arms, not through worldly conquerors, not by force of intellect, not by political

7. Blessed *are* the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.
8. Blessed *are* the pure in heart : for they shall see God.

of our physical nature are not perfectly satisfied except through God and his righteousness.

"It is significant that what he pronounces blessed is not the possession of, but the desire after, righteousness." — *Maclaren*. Only that longing is blessed which is so intense as to lead to doing.

They shall be filled. "The glorious thing about this law of life is that the hunger and thirst after the lower things of life can never be satisfied, but the hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be fully met. . . . The greatest problem before us to-day as a race is the problem of human desires."

FIFTH BEATITUDE, v. 7. Blessed are the merciful. Mercy is near of kin to love. It is love to the needy, the troubled, the sinful, even those who have wronged us. It relieves spiritual want and darkness as well as temporal ; would give the gospel to the heathen as well as food to the hungry.

"Mercy is the active side of meekness." "The merciful man is merciful in his judgments." "He clears his heart of antipathies, antagonisms, cynical suspicions." — *Maclaren*.

For they shall obtain mercy, from man and from God. Like begets like. The echo is like the original voice. But most of all do we need God's mercy, and showing mercy to others proves that we have a state of heart which makes it safe for God to forgive us. For him to forgive the unmerciful would be to multiply sins and wrongs. See the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matt. 18 : 21-35.

"It is not that the merciful obtain mercy by virtue of their mercifulness, but rather that their mercifulness stamps them as inheritors of the true forgiveness." — *Vaughan*. It is not the uniform that makes the officer ; it is his being an officer which gives him the right and duty to wear the uniform.

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE, v. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart. "'Heart,' in the Bible, includes the whole inner life, not merely the feelings. There is an implied contrast to ceremonial purity, to which the Jews attached great importance. Merely outward purity is probably also alluded to in the contrast. The idea of singleness of heart in the service of God seems to be more prominent than that of sinlessness." — *Rev. M. B. Riddle, D.D. LL.D.*

"Gold is pure when it has been separated by fire from all foreign matter. The diamond is pure, the crystal is pure, when there is nothing in them which hinders the refraction and reflection of light." The mirror is pure when it reflects accurately the image before it.

"An old paper tells the story of a man who was washing the large plate glass in a show window. There was one soiled spot that defied all efforts to remove it. After hard rubbing at it, using much soap and water, and failing to remove it, he found out the trouble. 'It's on the inside,' he called out to someone in the store. Many are trying to cleanse the soul from its sins, says the writer, they wash it with the tears of sorrow ; they scrub it with the soap of good resolves ; they rub it with the chamomils of morality ; but still the consciousness of it is not removed. The trouble is, it's on the inside." — *Harry H. Crawford*.

They shall see God. There must be a likeness of nature and feeling, in order to understand another. So only the pure can see a pure God. The impure, the bad, cannot even see him, much less enjoy him. They do not understand his nature. They do not know the meaning of his character. They are color-blind. The selfish do not believe that unselfish love exists. The vile do not believe that there is real purity. They cannot see. Seeing God, understanding him, realizing his character, in perfect sympathy with him, and hence dwelling in his presence is a blessing whose full meaning is beyond conception. Would the wicked and impenitent even enjoy the delights of heaven if they were to enter it ? Are there not illustrations of that in everyday life ?

When one is pure in his heart he is pure all through. There are few if any human beings who would dare to show all that is in their inmost soul. A little girl once said to her mother, "Mother, I think that Jesus was the only one who ever dared to live his inside out."

SEVENTH BEATITUDE, v. 9. Blessed are the peacemakers. "The active, heroic promoters of peace in a world full of alienation, party passion, and strife." — *Exp. Grk. Test.* Those who from this same disposition seek, like their Master, to reconcile

9. Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10. Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

men to God, to bring divine peace into sinful souls by leading them to the Prince of Peace.

We, His children, are God's instruments for bringing peace on earth. "It is our high privilege as Christians to bring to our fellow men the great gift of peace — peace with themselves, peace with their fellow men, peace with God. . . . The secret of peace with our fellows is the spirit of service." — *J. Edgar Park*. But the difficulty in this sinful world is that there are so many things that destroy peace.

But this does not mean "blessed are the pacifists." It does not mean that we are not to oppose that which is wrong, or to disturb the quiet of corruption and crime. Nothing is or can be settled till it is settled right. There can be no peace to the wicked. Our first duty, therefore, is, at any cost of disturbance, even to the cost of life itself, to get things where peace is possible. See Jesus' own words, Matt. 10 : 34, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword"; but always with true peace as the object.

The waking of the good to clash with evil in mortal conflict is one of the signs of peace. Peace is not stagnation. Peace is not contentment with evil. Peace is not sleeping over a volcano. Peace does not mean death. Wrongs covered up do not mean peace. Evil going on unhindered does not mean peace. But the conflict, the revelations of wrong in order to do away with them, the unearthing of crime in order to put it down, — these are signs of coming peace, the peace of victory, the peace of righteousness, the peace of heaven.

While peacemaking is more often the active virtue of fighting the wrong in order to overcome it and make peace possible; it also shows itself in the quiet bearing of *personal* wrongs rather than to stir up strife (the question of public wrongs is another matter). We all have, perhaps almost every day, chances to be peacemakers like "the little girl who said to her mother one evening, 'I was a peacemaker to-day.' 'How was that?' asked her mother. 'I knew something that I didn't tell,' was the unexpected reply." — *From the American Messenger*.

They shall be called the children of God, more exactly sons, full-grown. Because they are like their Father. They inherit his nature, his home, his joys, his blessings, his love. God is ever seeking to bring peace to men. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are ever seeking to reconcile men to God. The gospel ever brings peace, restoring the lost harmony of the soul with God and with nature and with itself. The reign of the gospel will be the reign of peace.

THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE, vs. 10-12. Blessed are . . . persecuted . . . Blessed are ye. In these verses we find both comfort for those who are persecuted, and a test both for ourselves and for others as to whether we are really living up to the Beatitudes, and have reason to expect their blessings.

But in order to receive the blessing the persecution must be for **righteousness' sake**, and the charges of evil doing must be false. Those Christians who in ancient times suffered martyrdoms because they would not deny their faith and their Jesus were many. It was terrible when multitudes were crucified and tortured and burned, as were the prophets before them. But Christianity prevailed because of their faithfulness.

The sky is full of these shining stars. So, standing beside St. John as he gazed into heaven, we hear one of the elders saying, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." But there are many not yet known to history but whose names are recorded in heaven, who in humble homes, in retired sickrooms, in the recesses of their own hearts, have been crucified on unseen crosses, and burned with invisible flames, and been victors in silent battles. "These, too, are martyrs, brother."

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven . . . great is your reward in heaven. Any ship can sail on a calm sea, but these are the tested ones which are sure to reach the harbor of heaven. Its rewards are theirs, for they have been tested as gold tried in the fire. They are to have crowns and glories in heaven. Only those who had part in the battle can join in the triumph. Only those who have done well can receive the "well done." Only those who have been faithful in the little can receive the wider kingdom.

43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ;

And the persecuted for righteousness' sake even now rejoice in the confident assurance that their cause will finally triumph.



Christian Martyrs.

G. L. Gerome.

III. SOME LAWS OF THE KINGDOM, vs. 13-42. These verses, and the following chapters of the Sermon on the Mount do not include all of Christ's teachings even concerning ethics. But it does include the Great Fundamental Principles of the Kingdom of Heaven, without which it is impossible to belong to that kingdom.

Christ says (v. 17) "Think not that I am come to destroy the law . . . but to fulfill." He then shows how he fulfilled the law, — by emphasizing its spirit, even more than the letter ; by showing how it extended to motives and feelings as well as to the outward actions ; by destroying the weeds in the garden so that the blossoms and fruit might grow the better.

For example, the law said, "thou shalt not kill" ; but Jesus says that unreasoning anger, the kind of passion which, if uncontrolled and long allowed, leads to murder, contains the essence of the guilt.

Resist not evil, but overcome evil with good. Have the spirit of love, do not give way to anger against those who insult, misrepresent and injure us. It is easy to have the form, but very hard to have the spirit. There is a distinction, however, which is very clear, between self-protection as such, involving resistance or retaliation and the punishment of the aggressor for our own sake ; and self-protection for the sake of or as a means to the protection of others. The spirit of love in dealing with evil is also shown by the character that loves to give (v. 42). Give always to him who asks, not always what he asks, but what is wisest and best ; as God answers our prayers. "Love is not to be divorced from wisdom and experience." "These precepts are not meant for fools." Alford well remarks : "To give everything to every one — the sword to the madman, the arms to the impostor, the criminal request to the temptress — would be to act as the enemy of others and ourselves." But the spirit that loves to give, that gives as much as possible in the wisest way, is Christlike and divine.

IV. THE IDEAL AND GOAL OF TRUE LIVING, vs. 43-48. The law says Love your neighbor and, by inference, hate your enemy. Jesus says, Love your enemy ; hate no man. And why ? (1) To prove your kinship with God, who loves all men, not merely the good. (2) To prove that your righteousness is deeper and truer than that of the sinners whom you despise.

But can we really love our enemies ? "This has been called the impossible commandment. . . . If we truly love them . . . that love will not mean that we

45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.

46. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so?

48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

condone, overlook, or excuse the crimes and evils perpetrated by them, or temper in any sense our hatred or detestation of those evils ; nor will it mean that we will lessen by a hair's breadth our determination to prevent by force the continuation of them. . . . To love good is to hate evil. The more one loves righteousness the more one is bound to abominate iniquity. . . . Unless hatred has the highest kind of love enshrined within it, it defeats its own object. . . . But let hate have this love within it that spells the redemption of him whom one resists to the death, and not only such a love and such a hate means the ennobling and magnifying of the character of him who feels it, but it means the ultimate salvation of him whom one thus loves." — *From a Sermon by Rev. Raymond Calkins, D.D. published in the Congregationalist and Advance.*

The Character Which Jesus Requires. We have seen and studied the elements of this character. Follow the laws of the Kingdom, — the Beatitudes, the laws of love ; make those the goal of your striving after the right ; carry them out to their perfect completion. **Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.** Discouraging? Not if we do not expect to attain it in a day, a month, any specified moment of time. A low ideal takes the heart out of endeavor, while a perfect ideal, attained by some one, approached by many in different degrees, inspires hope, awakens every motor impulse of the soul. "A man's goal must exceed his grasp, or what is heaven for?"

You will never get a man, or a woman, or a child, to do something well by declaring to him that it is easy. It is the hard things that spur the energies and make the triumph which is worth while. Some who should know say that too easy victories are detrimental to the soldier ; that to be at his best he should be obliged to encounter real resistance from the enemy. And it is the hard things conquered that make the mark upon the character. The soft dropping of water will, it is true, wear away the hardest rock, and make the mightiest cañons. But it takes centuries to do it, centuries of constant, persevering, monotonous toil. One mammoth convulsion of nature has done as much in an instant to change the face of the earth as eons of gentle droppings. Still, for the most of us, it is the quiet monotonous work, and perhaps for us who are given that work it is the hardest. Some, with an energy that chafes at restraint, would rather take the part of the earthquake than the silent, quiet, slow dropping of the water.

But in whatever sphere of life God's wisdom has put us, we must try to reach the standard God has placed before us, — "be ye perfect," with nothing lacking for the well-rounded Christian character. "Having given ourselves to Christ, there rests upon us an obligation for a more beautiful life, for nobler service, for sweeter living, for larger usefulness, for Christlier helpfulness, because we represent our Master, and are called to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect." — *Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D.*

"Nowadays . . . the Sermon on the Mount . . . is called an ethical document, and so it is, but its ethics are rooted in religion, and saturated in religion, and vitalized and glorified by religion. All the lines of the Sermon run up to God. The Beatitudes climb to God : 'Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God.' The motive of all our action is to be, God ; 'Let your light so shine before men, that they . . . may glorify God.' We are to avoid every semblance of irreverence, because the heavens and the earth, and Jerusalem, and our own head are all the creations of God. We are to love our enemies in order to be like God. We are to free ourselves from worry by remembering that God is our Father. The Sermon closes with two solemn warnings : we are not saved by a religious vocabulary, nor by philanthropic works, but only by a heart which is like God. What is the Sermon on the Mount but a passionate plea to fill our entire life with God?" — *Charles E. Jefferson, D.D.*

Do we measure up to Christ's standard?

LESSON V. — October 31.

HEW DOWN THE CORRUPT TREE — WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY. — Matt. 7:13-29.

PRINT Matt. 7:15-27.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* — MATT. 7:19.

Devotional Reading : Matt. 3:1-12.

Primary Topic : GOOD TREES AND BAD TREES.

Lesson Material : Matt. 7:16-20.

Memory Verse : By their fruits ye shall know them. Matt. 7:20.

Junior Topic : A SHARP AXE FOR A CORRUPT TREE.

Lesson Material : Matt. 7:13-23.

Memory Verses : Matt. 7:18, 19.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE FRUITS OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

Topic for Young People and Adults : COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

This lesson can be varied from the temperance lessons of other quarters by laying stress, especially in the older classes, upon the public evil of alcohol and the necessity, for the sake of the nation, to destroy it, root and branch.

The **Primary** classes will be greatly interested if the teacher can bring to them an apple or other fruit with a small piece of the branch to which it is attached. Ask how they know that a tree is an apple tree and how they know that it is a good tree? Then turn the question to their own lives; how do they know that a child is a good child?

The **Juniors** can be led further to see what must be done if the tree is seen to be bad, and the application made to the destruction of sin in all forms.

Intermediate and Senior classes will discuss the actual results of liquor selling and drinking, not confining themselves now to our own land, but going into the question as it is illustrated in conditions in other countries.

The **Young People and Adults** can emphasize the value of world-wide prohibition, and can discuss the means by which it can be brought about, and what our country, and we ourselves, can do to help.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

The works on Temperance named in Lesson XII of the Third Quarter. *The Scientific Temperance Journal*, edited by

Cora Frances Stoddard (30 Bromfield St., Boston, Mass.). *The Temperance Cause*, a philippic by Rev. Dr. Biedewolf. "Billy Sunday's" great *Sermon on Booze*.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

The same as for last lesson.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Is the use of alcohol as a beverage increasing or diminishing? The proof.

What is the influence of business to-day on the question?

What is the influence of the colleges to-day?

What is the effect of athletics?

Does the fear of being overcome keep many men from drinking?

Is there not danger of "intemperance" in other things than alcohol?

How does this "intemperance" differ from that in alcohol?

Can people be legislated into righteousness?

To what extent is authority justified in removing temptation?

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : Evil Must Be Destroyed.

- I. THE BROAD WAY OF DEATH,
Matt. 7:13, 14.
- II. THE CORRUPT TREE, Matt. 7:15-20.
- III. EMPTY PROFESSIONS, Matt. 7:21-23.
- IV. COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF EVIL,
Matt. 7:24-27.
- V. ALCOHOL, THE CORRUPT TREE.

15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

The verses of the lesson are applicable to so many evils, and teach so many lessons, that we will consider them briefly, in themselves, and turn to their application to alcohol and the liquor traffic as our last topic.

I. **THE BROAD WAY OF DEATH**, Matt. 7: 13, 14. The practical precepts of the Sermon on the Mount culminated in the Golden Rule. But there were still some things needed to complete the Sermon. The duty was very clear; the next thing was to persuade men to enter this kingdom, with its new life and spirit.

There are two ways set before each one of us, and only two:

The Narrow Gate that leadeth unto life.

The Broad Way that leadeth to destruction.

The word "strait" here is a different word from "straight." It is still used in such expressions as in "the Straits of Gibraltar," i.e. a place where the path narrows. The strait gate means the narrow, the difficult gate.

The gate must be narrow. But note, the gate is wide open, and all are invited to enter.

The broad way seems easier to walk in; there is, or seems to be, more company on the way, it must be pleasanter.

But the narrow gate opens on the path which leads to the joy and glory of heaven; the broad way leads down to destruction, and the place of remorse.

Gates to the Best Things Must Be Narrow. "Here is the kingdom of human learning: . . . and over the gate of that kingdom I find this inscription: 'Strait is the gate, narrow is the way.' Here is a little kingdom which we shall characterize as the kingdom of merely muscular competition. . . . strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads even to athletic supremacy. Here, for example, is a man who wishes to excel in authorship. . . . What is it that is written over the man's study and over the man's desk? This: 'Strait is the gate, narrow is the way.'" — *Joseph Parker*.

II. **THE CORRUPT TREE**, Matt. 7: 15-20. Beware of false prophets, or teachers. Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, according to its nature. Corrupt tree . . . evil fruit, decayed, unhealthy, of bad nature. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down. It is not allowed to take the place of good trees; its only use is to be burned for fuel. This was especially true in Palestine, where all the fruit trees were taxed, and no one could afford to keep in his orchard an unfruitful tree.

Note that we must measure life by its fruits, not by its weeds. An acre of desert has fewer weeds than an acre of the best garden in the land. But it is the garden that bears the fruit.

Note that it is not always necessary to decide exactly what the fruits are. One bad apple does not prove the tree bad; but the plant that produces thistles we know is not an apple tree.

Note that it is not only the presence of bad fruit that dooms a tree to destruction; it is also the absence of good fruit.

The test should be applied to ourselves as well as to false teachers.

III. **EMPTY PROFESSIONS**, Matt. 7: 21-23. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. They may be sincere wor-

22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

shippers of the Lord Jesus, but they may be mere formal believers, "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

The test is whether he **doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven**, or under his name is a worker of iniquity. "Not profession, but possession; not creed, but deed; not words, but works."

Even those who can say **we have prophesied in thy name**, those who have preached and written appeals to the religious side of men, **and in thy name have done many wonderful works**, even to the casting out of devils, the most wonderful of the works of Christ, may receive the condemnation, **I never knew you**. You have never had my spirit; your heart has never been right with God. Paul expressed this thought when he said (1 Cor. 9 : 27) "lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

IV. COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF EVIL, Matt. 7 : 24-27. Two contrasting pictures are given. *First, the wise man* who built his house upon a rock. "The house is the general fabric of an outwardly religious life." — *Ellicott*. "You see who the wise builder is. It is he who hears the Great Teacher's sayings, and not only hears them, but actually does them. He not only professes to be Christ's pupil, but also actually carries out in daily life the Instructions of the Mount."

The one who so builds his spiritual house lays his foundation on the Rock of Ages. And when the storms of temptation come, the torrent of evil companionship, the flood of worldly pleasures, striving to drive him from his stand for the good and righteousness and obedience to the will of God, it falls not; his character is so much a part of his very nature that he cannot yield.

Second, the foolish man, who built his house upon the sand, — anything except the will of God and his righteousness. He hears the words of Christ, believes in them, sees their beauty; but he **doeth them not**. They have no place in his real life. He values the praise of men more than that of God; he values his own selfish pleasure of a moment more than the eternal riches and glories of the heavenly home.

"And now observe the fate of this house on the sand. The same storms as in the case of the wise builder — the same rains of sorrow, and winds of temptation, and floods of death — will beat vehemently against his Character-house; but it will fall because of its foundation — it rested only on the sand, and great was the fall of it." — *Geo. D. Boardman, D.D.*

The evil character is totally destroyed; the evil house falls, and is a complete ruin; only that which is built upon the safe foundation standeth sure.

V. ALCOHOL, THE CORRUPT TREE. The application of this lesson to the question of Temperance is very clear. We enter into heaven, the kingdom of God on earth and hereafter, through the narrow gate, through striving against the temptations around us. The broad way, the easy slope down which so many have slipped after taking the "friendly glass" is thronged. It is hard for many not to yield to the temptation of the jolly companionship, the fascination of the drink itself, the dread of mockery by one's companions. Let all who do not know this hard strife, to whom intemperance offers no such temptation, thank God for His great mercy.

ALCOHOL IS A CORRUPT TREE, not a barren tree, but one full of fruit which is evil, corrupting, dangerous. It claims to be of great value to mankind; to be good,

pleasant, even "the gift of God." The advertisement of the product of one brewery which I have often seen in the street cars since the passing by Congress of the prohibition amendment says, "You cannot drink this good beverage *even in your own homes* if prohibition is written into the constitution of the United States." I should like to insert a mammoth question mark after the word "good"!

What Are the Fruits of Alcohol? We have seen them in our last Temperance Lesson a few Sundays ago, but it is well to review them, and emphasize them. The business man says, Even moderate drinking injures my good judgment. The railroad man says, Even in moderate drinking there is danger of a bad effect upon the mind, disturbing the judgment, distorting the reason. The athlete says, To be successful one must be, according to St. Paul's rule, "temperate in all things." And not only during the contest but during the long preparation for it. Not once will he break the trainer's rules, for he knows that some competitors will refrain from even that once, and gain strength while he is losing it. If it is worth while to do this for the sake of a brief time of an athletic contest, is it not worth while to keep "in training" always, so we may gain and keep, not only a strong healthy body, but an active and clear mind?

Archbishop Ireland said: "The great cause of social crime is DRINK. The great cause of poverty is DRINK. When I hear of a family broken up, I ask the cause, — DRINK. If I go to the gallows, and ask the victim its cause, the answer — DRINK.

"Then I ask myself in perfect wonderment, WHY DO NOT MEN PUT A STOP TO THIS THING!"

Hon. John D. Long, at one time Governor of Massachusetts, gave this message to the boys. "Boys, I know that it is not much use to preach to you, and that, even if an impression is made on you, it runs the risk of being effaced as soon as you come into exposure to a temptation. But if you could only have, in these bright, hopeful, confident days of yours, the experience of years, you would abstain from intoxicating liquors, not only as a matter of principle, but as a matter of hard common sense, and of your personal happiness, health, success and prosperity.

"There is no denying that intoxicating liquors are indulged in by many respectable people, or that they are associated, in some literature and in some society, with good fellowship and merry times. . . . But take my word for it, every business man or professional man, whatever his own habits, instinctively turns away from employing any young man who has the taint of liquor about him.

"Every physician now condemns the use of alcohol as a drink. Every employer counts the use of it against an employee. If you want a clear head, if you want a sound heart, if you want a clear conscience, if you want a healthy body, if you want money in your pocket and credit to your name, put your foot right down and say that you are going to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors, and keep the faith. . . . Be clean and wholesome. Keep your brain clear, your head steady, your self-respect firm, and you will have a life that is worth living. . . . You may think that you have self-control to take care of yourself. But the chances are that your self-control will be no more than pasteboard against a Gatling gun if you tamper with temptation and once begin the indulgence."

Robert W. Chambers, in the last chapter of his novel, *The Danger Mark*, puts these words into the mouth of a physician called upon to prescribe for a youth who has been ruined by drink: "This prescription is not going to cure you. Nothing that I can give you is going to perform such a miracle unless you help yourself. You ask for plain words. I will tell you this: alcohol is a poison, and it has not — and never had — in any guise whatever, the slightest compensating value for internal use. It isn't a food; it's a poison. It isn't a beneficial stimulant; it's a poison. It isn't an aid to digestion; it's a poison. It isn't a life-saver; it's a life-taker. It's a parasite, forger, thief, panderer, liar, brutalizer, murderer. There isn't, and there never has been, one word to say for it, or any excuse except morbid predisposition or self-inculcated inclination for swallowing it."

Settling His Accounts with Alcohol. A thick-set, ugly-looking fellow was seated on a bench in the public park and seemed to be reading some writing on a sheet of paper which he held in his hand.

"You seem to be interested in your writing," said a companion.

"Yes; I've been figuring up my accounts with Old Alcohol to see how we stand."

"And he comes out ahead, I suppose."

"Every time; and he has lied like sixty."

"How did you come to have dealings with him in the first place?"

"That's what I'm writing. You see he promised to make a man of me, but he made me a beast. Then he said he would brace me up, but he has made me go staggering round, then threw me in the ditch. He said I must drink to be social. Then he made me quarrel with my best friends, and to be the laughingstock of my enemies. He gave me a black eye and a broken nose. Then I drank for the good of my health. He ruined the little I had and left me 'sick as a dog.'"

"Of course."

"He said he would warm me up, and I was soon nearly frozen to death. He said he would steady my nerves, but instead he gave me delirium tremens. He said he would give me strength, and he made me helpless."

Besides the above, which are for the most part the fruits of alcohol to the man who drinks it, there are other fruits to the community, the state, and the nation. The cost of the traffic, millions of dollars spent in liquor, with only a small percentage returned to the nation in the way of taxes and license fees. The money spent in prisons, almshouses, and asylums which are largely filled by the victims of the drink traffic. Local option, — itself a halfway measure, — endangered by the interstate traffic, whether or not against the law. The waste of foodstuffs, of days' labor, of material through unsteady hands. The waste of fuel in its production, and in its transportation. The waste of freight space necessary for other purposes, especially in these times. The waste of man-power, not only those who drink the liquor, but those employed in its manufacture, its transportation, and its sale. Were the men thus employed making real necessities, their price might be reduced.

THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC. *Hew Down the Corrupt Tree.* Why? 1. *As a war measure.* No halfway measures were allowed in our effort to do our part to win in the great World War. As a war measure first the making of whiskey, then the brewing of beer, and finally the sale of liquor, were prohibited. It was found to be necessary to conserve materials, fuel, time, transportation, and men. Halfway measures would not do. Give it an inch, and it would take an ell. Let there be the slightest leak in the dam and the flood will force itself through.

During the contest on the question of war prohibition there were many appeals sent out to the public to enlist them on the side of the safety of our boys. Here is one as a sample:

"Probably millions of our boys will go to the front before the war ends, to do their level best to stop the tide of red ruin and outrageous killing.

"But there's one fact that stands out clear and sharp, as we take a world-wide view of the war — namely, that we've got to reckon not only with 'Kaiser Bill Hohenzollern' but with 'Kaiser John Barleycorn.'

"Every great general in this war — every great strategist who has had the courage to face all the facts, has pointed out the danger of drink.

"Lloyd George put it this way:

'We are fighting Germany, Austria, and Drink, and as far as I can see, the greatest of the three deadly foes is Drink.'

"Marshal Joffre said:

'Alcohol, by diminishing the moral and material strength of the Army, is a crime against the national defense in the face of the enemy.'

"Men with drink in them don't fight — they brawl,' said Vance Thompson. 'It is not boldness men get out of Drink, what they get is the fuddled logic of a maniac.'

"The nations at war very soon discovered who their real enemy was. It was not the Teuton and the Turk — it was ALCOHOL.

"And so France, England and Russia have grappled with their arch-enemy — but he is putting up the biggest fight in his history, for he knows that if he loses out in this war, he will be played out forever.

"We are fighting Germany, Austria and Drink,' declared Lloyd George —

"To-day England's foes are America's foes. We know how to meet the first two; but what are we doing about the THIRD?

"We can fight this enemy at home. It lies with the men who cannot go to the Front in Europe, the women who cannot help out as nurses or welfare workers, to enlist and to overthrow our common foe.

"CAN WE COUNT ON YOU?"

2. *To increase the efficiency of the nation whether in war or peace.* If the efficiency in war forces the nation to adopt prohibition, why is it not wise from an economic point of view to prohibit the traffic in peace time?

One of the strangest things about this whole question is that the minds of all of us have been distinctly influenced by the far-reaching, steadily promoted propaganda of the liquor interests. We are warned that we must not invade personal liberty. The effects of liquor upon industry have been such that our great industrial enterprises to a very large extent have set aside personal liberty in this respect. The fact that alcohol is the most important and direct cause of nearly all those forms of demoralization which do the most damage to our community life has also greatly weakened this point of view. The authority of the community has at the same time been steadily growing. If the national government can deal effectively with food containing deleterious elements it certainly is justified in preventing us from having drink containing equally harmful and destructive ingredients. . . .

"We have been told that if liquor were suddenly taken away from those who had been accustomed to it, the effect upon them would be such as to drive them to far worse things, if such worse things there be. As a matter of fact, the best medical practice to-day, with perhaps rare exceptions, cuts off all liquor at once in the treatment of cases of alcoholism. It is found that the best and surest recoveries are made by bringing the human system as quickly as possible out from under the power of the alcoholic drug. In fact, the complete elimination of alcohol comes consciously to large numbers of men addicted to it as being a distinct blessing, because they then realize that without its constant temptation they can with increasing freedom give their attention to the things of a decent and normal life.

"We have had held before us the threat that prohibition will produce a panic, that a great financial disaster would overwhelm the country if it were enforced. As a matter of fact there has been an eloquent succession of testimony showing that prohibition brings distinct improvement to all legitimate forms of business. In Seattle at the end of six months nine-tenths of the property that had been used for the liquor business had been taken up by other lines of trade, and the other one-tenth was mostly of a sort never sought after for other purposes than those of the saloon. The labor organizations in the prohibition states are now coming forward and are saying, through their officers, that, though they opposed the enactment of prohibition, they find that their membership is growing, their treasuries are in better condition, the employment of their members is more regular, and their negotiations with their employers have become more satisfactory." — *Robert A. Woods in The Christian Endeavor World.*

3. *For the sake of the young, and the weak.* The drunkards of to-morrow must come from the children of to-day. Are we willing to give them up to such a fate?

Seven Good Reasons. A lawyer was speaking at great length and with a great display of learning in opposition to a prohibitory law. An old farmer, who had been listening quietly, shut up his knife with a snap, and said, "I may not understand all the points of this question, but I have seven good reasons for voting for prohibition." "What are they?" asked the lawyer. The shrewd old farmer answered wisely, "Four sons and three daughters." — *Young People's Weekly.*

How Kipling Became a Prohibitionist. "Rudyard Kipling, whose stories and poems are read by all the English-speaking world, tells how, in a concert-hall in the city of Buffalo, he saw two young men get two girls drunk and then lead them reeling down a dark street. Mr. Kipling has not been a total abstainer, nor have his writings commended temperance, but of that scene he writes:

"Then, recanting previous opinion, I became a prohibitionist. Better it is that a man should go without his beer in public places and content himself with swearing at the narrow-mindedness of the majority; better it is to poison the inside with very vile temperance drinks, and to buy lager furtively at back doors, than to bring temptation to the lips of young fools such as the four I had seen. I understand now why the preachers rage against drink. I have said, 'There is no harm in it, taken moderately!' and yet my own demand for beer helped directly to send these two girls reeling down the dark street to — God alone knows what end. If liquor is worth drinking, it is worth taking a little trouble to come at — such as a man will undergo to compass his own desire. It is not good that we should let it lie before the eyes of children, and I have been a fool in writing to the contrary." — *Anon.*

Nail Up the Hole. "'I took my little boy on my knee,' writes a father, 'and told him the story of the lost lamb. How it found a hole in the hedge and crawled

through, how glad it was to get away, how it skipped and played in the sunshine, until it wandered so far that it could not find its way back. And then I told him how the wolf chased it, and how finally the Good Shepherd rescued it, and carried it back to the fold. The little fellow did not say a word until I got to that part of the story where the Shepherd had carried the lamb, wounded and bleeding, back to the fold, when he exclaimed, "Say, papa, did He nail up the hole in the fence?"

"Every saloon is a hole in the fence. While one crawls back hundreds are devoured by the wolves." — *Record of Christian Work.*

"Not because God's grapes are evil or unholy,
Not because He found not all things 'very good,'
Not because He has not said, within His Eden,
'All things are given unto you for food,'
But because of them, His weak and tempted children,
Who cannot sip the cup and put it by,
Who cannot taste the wine and not be drunken,
Oh! for them let us forego it, you and I."

— *Quoted in Record of Christian Work.*

HOW MAY WE MAKE SURE THAT THE NATION WINS IN THIS FIGHT? *By education.* Rev. Ernest Bourner Allen said, at the World's Sixth Sunday School Convention, held in Washington, that the tidal wave of temperance sentiment that has swept over the nation during these last years is due in great part to the fact that "for forty years there has been scientific temperance instruction in our Sunday Schools." There have been other factors. He called attention to this as "last, but far from least."

"Those saloon keepers," he exclaimed, "who laughed and sneered a few years ago because the boys and girls carried banners in the parade, forgot to read one of them, which said, 'Tremble, King Alcohol; we shall grow up.' They have grown up!"

By the promotion of everything that makes for a real heart religion. Not a formal church-going; not a mere profession, like him who said "Lord, Lord," in the days of Christ; but one which will produce the state of mind and heart which will make one "do the will of the Father." The most and surest of the rescues of drunkards have come through their conversion, their taking the Lord Jesus Christ as their Master and the Ruler of their lives. Read *Twice-born Men*, by Harold Begbie; and the reports of Rescue Missions, of the Salvation Army; indeed of any true minister of Christ who has had long dealings with sinful men. It is almost impossible to entirely empty any container; it can only be done by the use of an air-pump, and any lack of care in the process or any accident later will let in air, — and it is no longer empty. But fill the container with something to take the place of that which we took out of it, and the air will also be displaced.

Religion — the Biggest Factor in Making Men!

"We have spent \$1,250,000 on appliances in these cars to secure your safety," reads a poster in every subway car in New York.

"And STILL they have accidents!"

"No wonder that they have added the line:

"Won't you help us by being careful?"

Same story with the doctors and sanitarians and chemists and all other experts who have been working to MAKE us healthy — chiefly to KEEP us from getting sick.

"Won't you help us by being careful?" — they are beginning to say to us.

"There's a point where these experts must stop — where it's plainly up to us — because when they've found out what is perilous for us and warned us to keep away from danger, THEIR responsibility, and principally their power, ceases.

"They cannot keep us healthy and free from accidents if we do not fight in our own way to avoid the causes of sickness and accidents.

THE FIGHT ON DISEASE IS CHIEFLY A FIGHT FOR CHARACTER.

"It's in the development of one's mind and in getting a grip on one's self that the average man will be healthy and free from physical weaknesses. Because of this, religion plays a big part in downing disease and in building up mind and body.

"No man can long have a healthy BODY if his MIND is weak and diseased. And no man can have a healthy mind if his HEART is weak and diseased and impure.

"Fundamentally, it's a man's heart that makes or destroys him. And the greatest motive power in heart development is religion and all that it stands for.

"THEREFORE, RELIGION IS THE BIGGEST SINGLE FACTOR IN MAKING MEN."

LESSON VI. — November 7.

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN LIVING. — Matt. 6:1-7:12.

PRINT Matt. 6:19-84.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* — MATT. 6:33.

Devotional Reading : Rom. 12:9-21.

Additional Material for Teachers : Mark 10:23-31; Luke 11:2-4; 12:22-32.

Primary Topic : OUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S CARE.

Lesson Material : Matt. 6:25-30; Ex. 16:4, 5, 14-18.

Memory Verse : He careth for you. 1 Pet. 5:7.

Junior Topic : JESUS TEACHES HOW TO PRAY.

Lesson Material : Matt. 6:5-15.

Memory Verses : Matt. 6:9-13.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : GOLDEN RULES FOR LIVING.

Lesson Material : Matt. 6:1-4; 7:1-12.

Topic for Young People and Adults : COUNSELS FOR DAILY LIVING.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

An eminently practical lesson, differing little in the different grades; what is practical for one is practical for the others, only differing in degree and somewhat in application.

In the **Primary** grade the emphasis in to-day's lesson is laid on the care our Heavenly Father has for all his children. The **Juniors** should learn what belongs to true prayer, that praise and worship are a needful part of it, and can illustrate their conclusions by a study of the Lord's Prayer.

In the older classes we study the character of our daily lives if we were conformed to the ideal Christ sets for us. Does Jesus give us rules to follow, or principles which guide us to make our own rules? Why is Christ's method better than precise rules? What would be the result in the world if all lived up to the "Golden Rule," in private life, in society, in business, in politics?

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

The same as the last two lessons.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : Principles of Christian Living.

- I. RULES FOR CHRISTIAN GIVING,
Matt. 6:1-4.
- II. JESUS TEACHES HOW TO PRAY,
Matt. 6:5-15.
- III. TRUST IN OUR HEAVENLY FATHER,
Matt. 6:16-34.
- IV. SOME GOLDEN RULES FOR LIVING,
Matt. 7:1-12.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Matthew, and on Luke, and books on the Sermon on the Mount, mentioned in previous lessons.

Works on the Lord's Prayer, such as those by Farrar, Gladden, Boardman (*The Model Prayer*), Murray (*With Christ in the School of Prayer*), J. R. Miller's *The Golden Gate of Prayer*. Professor Phelps, *The Still Hour*.

I. RULES FOR CHRISTIAN GIVING, Matt. 6:1-4. 1. **NEGATIVE.** Do not **your alms before men** for the purpose of being seen of them. The Greek word for "to be seen" is the one which gives us our word "theatre." The rule tells us not to be theatrical in our giving, making a parade and spectacle of it. "We may be seen to do good, but not do good to be seen." — *Bishop Wordsworth*. "Alms" is rendered in the revisions "righteousness." It means more than giving of money or other help to the poor, or to the church. "If we notice that the word 'righteousness' is the equivalent of our word 'religion' the commandment runs: *Take heed that ye do not your religion before men to be seen of them.*" — *R. F. Horton*.

Do not sound a trumpet before thee, that is, do not give for effect, in a boastful way. The figure is common, as we might say, "Don't hire a brass band when you give." Do not give because it is to be published in the local paper, and people will talk about how good and generous you are.

Why did our Lord give this command to his disciples? 1. Because it was *hypocritical*. Many a man gave largely because people would know, and applaud him, who would give nothing simply for the cause. And many a man has ground down his employees, and stinted his family, and neglected his religion, who yet puts his name for large sums at the head of those subscription papers which will bring his name before the public.

Because such boastful givers **have their reward**; they have already received the reward they sought, and no further reward will come to them. They have it all at once; there is nothing left for the years of eternity. It is not the reward which the wise man would seek; but it is the reward they wanted. It is not the **reward from your Father in heaven**; that reward is not given to such givers. Yet that is the reward that all Christ's disciples should most earnestly seek.

2. **POSITIVE.** Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. Be so secret that even you yourself do not know what you give. We are to give so naturally that it is done, as it were, unconsciously. Give because it is needed, for love's sake, for mercy's sake, to help on God's kingdom, and to give help to the poor, without any selfish motive of applause, or reputation. In this case **thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee**. The hypocrite's reward was "wages," "pay" as to a servant. God's reward is quite a different thing; likeness to God, sympathy with him, a nobler character, a more generous disposition, larger means of doing good, and a larger part in the making of the world happier and better, a share in the final victory of good.

Note. We have here a principle rather than a rule. In many cases it is impossible that others shall not know of a part of our gifts. But one should never give for the purpose of appearing generous. Some give more to causes where the people will know, and little to the rest. And it is mean and unchristian to judge others from their gifts, either to consider them ungenerous because their gift is small, or hypocrites because it is large. You don't know. Only the Father which seeth in secret has the right to judge of the motive.

II. JESUS TEACHES HOW TO PRAY, Matt. 6:5-15. Here also Jesus gives us both negative and positive commands. **Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites**, who do not really commune with God in their prayers, but pray for display, and who have therefore already received their reward,—not the answer to their prayer, for they did not pray; but the reputation for piety, and the consequent offices and emoluments for which they were working.

But thou, in contrast with these, shalt **enter into thy closet**, "thy inner chamber" (Rev.), and . . . **shut thy door**. Shut all thy doors; keep out other people, other members of the family,—that is shutting the material door. But also shut the door of your mind,—shut out thoughts that may interfere with your worship, that may make you less earnest and absorbed in your communion with the Father.

Note that this precept does not forbid praying in the presence of others, as in the church, or prayer meeting, or family, where the prayer is sincere and in no degree for show. For Jesus and his disciples prayed with others. It would forbid formal prayer in public; prayer where the others could not unite. The phrase "Let us unite in prayer" should have a real meaning.

Neither does the precept forbid the lifting of the heart to God in the crowded streets or the midst of a busy office or factory; but we are far more likely to do this if we have regular meetings with God in some quiet, retired spot.

Jesus gave another negative precept,—**use not vain repetitions**, do not make mere formal prayers without any real praying. Do not repeat over and over again set forms, as if there were some virtue in the mere act of repeating a set of words, and each repetition were an addition to the virtue of the charm. So some people "say their prayers" at night as a talisman with some magic power against harm; as useless as the prayer-wheels of the heathen. But a repetition is not *vain* so long as it is the true expression of a longing heart.



A Muezzin Chanting the Call to Prayer, from a Minaret Gallery in Damascus.

Why are such prayers wrong? Because God is our Father, and prayer should be the simple talking of the child with his father. Because **our Father knoweth what we have need of, before we ask him.** He does not need, therefore, to be reminded over and over again; as a fretful child teases for something. But if this is so why pray at all? Because as an earthly father wants his child to tell him his desires, even though they may be foolish, or are sure to be anticipated by the father, so our heavenly Father wants us to turn to him with our longings and with our troubles or our thanksgiving, because that is our best way of maintaining the real communion between God and man which is the soul of religion.

THE MODEL PRAYER, vs. 9-13. According to Luke this prayer was given at the request of the disciples for some form of prayer, such as was given by John the Baptist to his disciples. Since the form is somewhat different in the two Gospels; and since Jesus said, not "in these words pray ye," but **after this manner pray ye**; we see that Jesus did not give this prayer to his followers as a set form of words which they were to repeat, in order to be heard. He gave it rather as a model upon which all true prayer should be based. We have instances of prayer by the disciples, but none of their using exactly this form of words. But so long as we fill it with the true spirit of prayer there is in many cases a distinct advantage in its use in the form we have it. It is known to practically all worshippers, and can be used as a means of united oral prayer by congregations of all creeds and of all ages. In no other prayer can all possible denominations, all possible races, join together in oral repetition.

This prayer may be divided into three distinct portions: Worship, petition, praise. **Our Father**, "a conscious person, a living, loving Father." This binds together in one family, in one brotherhood, all that dwell upon the earth. **Which is in heaven.** Where it is I know not; no man fully knows; but it is where Our Father is.

Hallowed be thy name. The name stands for the person; it includes all the names, all the revelations, of God. The name of our Father is hallowed not only by treating Him with reverence, but also by adding to the respect and honor in which His name is held among men. It is hallowed by the fidelity, nobility, and beauty of our conduct.

Thy kingdom come, which "is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." "Wherever morality and purity are gaining, wherever the vile are becoming less vile, the cruel less cruel, the covetous less covetous, there the kingdom is advancing."

What can we do to advance the kingdom? Wherever we help one another to the living of better lives, to be more truthful or upright or honorable, or kind, or faithful in our duties to God and man, — there we are helping to answer our prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God.

Do you want it to come? come to your store, your business, your shop, your study, your table, your heart?

How near to you do you desire that the kingdom of God should come?

Thy will be done. This does not only mean that we yield ourselves to his discipline, the suffering he imposes, as it is so often used. We may settle beforehand that God's will is a good will. It is only in a secondary sense that suffering can ever be said to be the will of God. His will is expressed in his laws. Obedience to his laws brings health and happiness and peace; disobedience brings suffering. God's will is that men should obey his laws. The suffering is a warning against disobedience, and a dissuasive from it.

On earth as it is in heaven. This clause is regarded by many as belonging to the last three, — may thy name be hallowed as it is in heaven, perfectly, from the heart, without exception; thy kingdom come as in heaven, completely, without reservation; thy will be done as in heaven, cheerfully, entirely, lovingly.

Give us this day our daily bread, the first of the petitions. It is for the absolute necessities of life that we first ask. Without life we cannot worship, cannot praise. But it does not only mean bread for our bodies, it means the deepest needs of our minds, of our souls.

Give, yet we must earn it by honest work; *us*, not me, — it takes in all mankind and identifies us with all humanity. *Our*, not others'; this teaches us a lesson of self-support, a lesson of frugality, a lesson of charity. Bread that we beg is not ours; bread that we steal, that we get by fraud, is not ours; bread that is gained by the oppression of others is not ours.

Daily, that we may learn to trust thee for the morrow. We must in the case of bread for our bodies plan the sowing, the cultivating, the harvesting, and the storing

19. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

24. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

of the food for the future; to live entirely on what we can find in the fields and gardens on each day of the year means starvation in most lands and climes. But we can trust God for the future, since he will provide for us daily. Without him we could not sow or reap, or preserve the harvest from the ravages of the destroyer. And our spiritual needs, we cannot store for the future; they must come fresh every morning.

"Lord, for to-morrow and its needs,
I do not pray;
But keep me, guide me, love me, Lord,
Just for to-day."

Bread, not luxuries, only necessities. But a sufficiency.

Forgive us our debts. One of the first and deepest needs of the human soul is forgiveness from our heavenly Father, — to be received back into his fellowship, his family, his home. But one necessary condition of receiving forgiveness is that we **forgive our debtors**. An unforgiving spirit not only does not deserve forgiveness, but cannot receive it even if offered.

Lead us not into temptation, because we feel our weakness, and because he that wants to be tempted is already half fallen. But if God in his wisdom brings us into trials and tests, in order that we may gain the victory, and may grow strong and brave, then "we may count it all joy" (Jas. 1: 2). **But deliver us from the evil**, of all kinds. Remove the evil from us, if it be thy will; but if not help us to conquer it, and so to be delivered from it.

Praise to God, — the Doxology. **For thine is the kingdom**, the rule and the right over all nature and man. **And the power**, natural and spiritual. **And the glory**, majesty, for ever, without end, **Amen**.

III. TRUST IN OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, Matt. 6: 16-34. The value of fasting is, like prayer, in its being from the heart. If it is done for show, for the praise of men, it is meaningless. If it is done in secret it is the humbling of one's self before the Father, in penitence for all that has seemed to separate us from God; and the loving trust in him, that he will give us all that is needful, if we only do his will.

Lay not up treasures on earth. This subject belongs to our everyday life; no one can escape it; it touches us on every side. It must be treasure on earth, or treasure in heaven; we have our choice. The command does not mean that we are not to accumulate treasure for our needs. It does forbid hoarding them merely for the sake of holding possession; selfishly, without thought of the good that might be done with them.

"The desire to acquire wealth is keen and with many men controlling. Success in life is popularly measured by one's success as a money-getter. Jesus in the text disapproves this.

"Jesus does not disapprove laying up treasure, but distinctly approves it; he disapproves the customary place of deposit, and this on account of insecurity. The earth, he says, is an unsafe place of deposit.

"Jesus affirms that heaven affords absolute security, as over against the insecurity of earth, as a place of deposit of one's treasure.

"Treasure capable of being laid up in heaven included such things as, when acquired, form a part of one's self. They are not external to one's self. They are not

25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

material, but spiritual. Not houses and lands and negotiable securities, but right aims, pure purposes, holy desires, high ambitions, unselfish endeavors, — all having their roots in the principle which Jesus made fundamental in character." — *Rev. C. W. Huntington, D.D.*

"I stored my gold for future trust;
But when I came, there lay a little dust.

"I craved a quick success of clamorous praise,
To find a loneliness in famished days.

"I followed pleasure's glad alluring face:
She left me in a sad, deserted place.

"But one small thing I wrought of kindly deed —
One act of love — hath brought gold for my need."
— *Arthur L. Salmon.*

Our Heavenly Father's Care. Take no thought, that is, no anxious thought, as in the revisions. "Thought" had that meaning when our Bible was translated. This command does not tend to idleness, or want of thrift, or to poverty; but on the contrary to the best prosperity, and to the best enjoyment of whatever God gives us; while overanxiety tends to dishonesty, to crime, to selfishness, to disappointment, to bitterness of spirit. "A man's business is just to do his duty. God takes upon himself the feeding and the clothing. Will the work of the world be neglected if a man thinks of his work, his duty, God's will to be done, instead of what he is to eat, what he will drink, and wherewithal he is to be clothed? I think that the work of the world will be only so much the better done." — *Macdonald.*

Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need, and he will not deprive you of any need. Only he wants you first of all to be good, to be heavenly, to have those qualities which make blessedness immortal. If we seek God's righteousness God will see that our necessary wants are supplied. Most of the losses and disasters in business come directly or indirectly from seeking mammon first, and not the kingdom of God.

Trust in God does not mean that we are to sit still and expect the food to be brought to us without any exertion on our part. There are two ways of trusting. "In the paper published by the Salvation Army this suggestive story is told. A mother discovered her little daughter lying in the middle of a muddy garden path. She urged her to get up, but the child refused. 'I'm waiting,' she placidly remarked.

"What for?' asked her mother.

" 'For God to pick me up,' the young person answered. 'I falled down and I pwayed God pick me up, and he doesn't do it vewy quick.'

"Her mother explained to her that she might lie there all day before God worked a miracle for her lazy little self, that he had given her sturdy arms and legs, an intelligent brain, the power of picking herself up, and he expected her to answer her own prayer.

"There is another story, well-known, of a small girl who prayed God to keep her brother from catching birds, and then told her mother that she was sure God would do what she asked, for she had been out and smashed the traps. Which child's 'theology' was right?" — *Tarbell*.

Peter learned this lesson, for he says (1 Peter 4 : 7), "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

"I never thought of telling him
The cares that blurred my bit of sky;
He seemed too great and far away
To heed such simple folks as I.

"God's love lay heavy on the woods;
It rested on the things asleep,
It blessed the squirrel and his store,
It touched the warm wool of the sheep.

"Till once I wandered in the woods,
When winter ruled our northern land,
And found the buds of next year's spring,
Protected by a sheltering hand.

"A tiny bird with merry chirp
Settled upon the sedges dry,
And munched the seeds placed there for him
By Him who hears the sparrow's cry.

"And there within the winter woods,
While winter ruled our northern land,
The secret of God's love grew bright;
I groped and touched my Father's hand."

— *Mary Davis*.

"The ghost of to-morrow haunts many persons. They fear the future. They sorrow about what the days may bring forth. And by this worrying and fretting care they incapacitate themselves for bravely meeting to-morrow when it does come. The Master wants us to trust him for the to-morrows. They are His, stored up by His hand, and therefore laden with nothing but good for His disciples. So let trust take the place of trembling, and faith the place of fear." — *Ellis*.

IV. SOME GOLDEN RULES FOR LIVING, Matt. 7 : 1-12. JUDGE NOT. The word for "judge" in this chapter does not mean "form an opinion," for every one must do this of many persons and things. Indeed we are told to do so (Luke 12 : 57 ; John 7 : 24 ; 1 John 4 : 1). It means censorious judgment, condemning others, imputing wrong motives. It forbids us to sit in judgment upon our neighbors, condemning them for what we see, when we cannot know all the facts. We tend also to judge others by one fault, and forget their many virtues. The chronic faultfinder is no true judge. And we shall all be judged in the same way. This is the simple fact. Men will naturally return the same kind of judgment which you give to them. Harsh judgment and severe criticism awaken the same in others. It is a moral echo.

I read once years ago that a person most readily noticed in others those faults and habits which he himself had. Since then I have been noticing. It is not as invariably true as the writer seemed to think, according to my experience ; but it is more often true than we are prone to think. Especially is it true in the moral sphere. The selfish man considers the whole world selfish, and construes any opposition he encounters as due to the selfish desire of others to take what belongs to him. The ruler who so desires power over others that he is willing to take up arms and brave the whole world on the battlefield, and to do a great work of destruction on the plea of military necessity, thinks that the enemy opposing him has the same ideals and aims.

There are plenty of reasons why we should not judge others.

1. One is that it is not our duty. We are not appointed judge of our neighbor.
2. Another is the patience of God. If he can bear with a man's shortcomings, surely we should do so.
3. Still another is that we cannot do it fairly ; we see but the surface ; we cannot, as God, look upon the heart.

Jesus illustrates this Golden Rule of judging by the mote and the beam. He draws a picture and shows how morally grotesque the conduct of the faultfinder is. "Beam" literally means a *log, joist, or rafter* ; a graphic and almost droll representation of a comparatively great fault. "The word 'mote' suggests *dust* ; whereas the figure is that of a minute *chip* or *splinter* of the same material with the *beam*." — *Prof. M. R. Vincent*. Here is a man with a huge log across his eyes ; and behold

him trying to extract from the eye of his neighbor a tiny splinter that has flown therein ! perhaps from the log before his own eyes !

But there is one danger. While you must not condemn others you must not go around with closed eyes, supposing every one equally good, and safe as a companion for yourself and your children. There are those who will only make a misuse of the highest and holiest things in religion. **Cast not your pearls before swine.** You must change the nature of the swine before your pearls will do them any good. Men often love to argue on religion, and even read the Bible, not that they may get any good, but find some new perversion or false argument against the truth. In many cases it is wise *not to argue* with settled errorists. To argue often only fixes the error in the mind. It does not, however, follow that we can do nothing for them. There are things they can understand — sympathy, lovingkindness, aid in temporal things, the love of Jesus Christ as exemplified in human hearts. By these we are to seek to change them into sincere men and Christians, and then they will understand the holy things and appreciate the pearls.

BE HONEST AND EARNEST IN PRAYER. To live according to the principles of the Sermon on the Mount will be impossible to us without that help from above which our Father is always ready to give us. But help cannot come to us until we are ready to receive it ; we could not use it until the heart has been prepared. Those who have had to do with the students in our schools can understand this. To aid a student in the solution of a problem before he has either mastered the rules which must be applied to it, or studied the conditions given in it gives no true aid ; he will be just as unable to solve the next problem of the same sort. Carry a child over *all* the hard places on the road and he will never make a climber.

But we must first be *honest* in our prayer. "One reason we do not pray better, I suppose, is, that we are afraid of being answered. It is a very serious thing to pray, because we may be taken at our word." — *Alexander McKenzie*. "No prayer takes hold of God until it first takes hold of the man." — *Horace Bushnell*. "Prayer is a God-given instinct never to be repressed without sin. Prayer is expression. Prayer is fellowship. Prayer is friendship. Prayer is the intimacy of a boundless confidence, withholding nothing from the Beloved Friend." — *Charles Cuthbert Hall, D.D.*

After honesty comes *earnestness*. If we are honest we will be earnest. If we honestly desire a thing we shall be earnest in our endeavor to obtain it. The earnestness of our effort to obtain anything is the measure of our honest desire for that thing. "Half-heartedness" is the word often used for an effort which does not call forth all our powers.

The Threefold Way of Obtaining. Jesus gives us three methods of prayer, with perhaps three degrees of intensity. **Ask, . . . seek, . . . knock.** *Ask*, express your desire, go to God with it, raise your heart in definite petition for the supply of the need. **For every one that asketh receiveth.** There is no exception. And the answer will be given according to the kind of asking. Why must we ask for things when our **Father which is in heaven** is so ready to **give good things to them that ask him**? God gives us many things whether we ask for them or not (Matt. 5 : 45), because he loves to pour out his love, and would prove to us that he is ready and willing to give. But the best things, and the best blessings of those given to good and bad alike, can be received only by those who care for them enough to ask for them. Books, libraries, schools, churches, the Holy Spirit, communion with God, a higher life, a nobler character, cannot be given to people who care for none of these things until they are desired and sought for.

Illustration. In many libraries there are some rare and valuable books, pamphlets or manuscripts which are kept in a locked safe unless called for ; they are not put on the shelves of the reading room for any one to obtain by simply reaching out the hand and taking them. But there is no hesitation in letting those have them who care enough to ask for them at the proper place. They are there for the purpose of being read ; yet the reader must especially ask for them.

Seek by all active efforts, which are active prayers ; use all possible means. **And he that seeketh findeth.** Most of the best things must be sought for, as the graces, education, character. "There is no good in praying for anything unless you will also try for it. All the sighs and supplications in the world will not bring wisdom to the heart that fills itself with folly every day, or mercy to the soul that sinks itself in sin, or usefulness and honor to the life that wastes itself in vanity and inanity." — *Dr. Henry van Dyke*.

Knock at the door of God's treasure house of blessings, for those blessings which no seeking can obtain, but which must be given by God. We are to knock until the door is opened, for in time to him that knocketh the door shall be opened. "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness." — *Trench*.

"God's best gifts, like valuable jewels, are kept under lock and key and those who want them must, with fervent faith, importunately ask for them, for God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." — *Moody*.

Illustration. Jesus illustrates his point by comparisons with a human father. Will any good father refuse to his child the good things for which he asks? or give him bad things in their places? Assuredly not! If ye then, being evil, imperfect, with more or less selfishness mingled with all you do, give good gifts unto your children, how much more, the difference is infinite, shall your Father which is in heaven give good things. He is too wise and good to give harmful things, even when asked for. We do not know enough to always ask for the best things; but God will give us the best we really want; withholding the evil that we unknowing ask.

"Man must ask, and God will answer, yet we may not understand,
Knowing but our own poor language, all the writing of His hand;
In our meager speech we ask Him, and He answers in His own;
Vast beyond our thought the blessing that we blindly judge is none."

— *Lucy Larcom*

"I know not by what methods rare,
But this I know: God answers prayer.

"I know it cometh soon or late;
Therefore, we need to pray and wait

"I know not when He sends the word
That tells us fervent prayer is heard.

"I know not if the blessing sought
Will come in just the guise I thought.

"I leave my prayers with Him alone
Whose will is wiser than my own."

How to Receive. We have been studying all this time how to ask for God's blessings. Is there not some condition in the receiving also? Are we to take the good things which God gives us so freely, and let the matter stop there? Again notice the illustration of the human father. He wishes a return for his goodness to his children; and so does our heavenly Father from us. First, we should thank him, in words. How often do we do this? How many prayers are largely, or wholly, made up of petition? Some one has said that we pray when we want something, temporal or spiritual; but we do not pray when we have received the blessing for which we prayed.

Second, we should love him for his goodness to us.

Third, we should obey him, when he speaks.

"I praise Thee for the gift received
Before I ask,
And with the word, 'I have believed,'
I take my task.

"I will forget the past abhorred,
To faith be true,
And only ask, 'What wilt Thou, Lord,
That I shall do?'"

— *Amos R. Wells*.

Fourth, we should be ready to serve him. "Have you heard of the Arab beggar who sat at the gate of the rich man's house, on whose bounty he depended, and from whose hands he received daily gifts? One day the rich man wanted to send a letter in a hurry, and seeing the beggar, asked him to deliver it. But the beggar proudly lifted himself up and said, 'I solicit alms; I do not run errands.'

"Some Christians are like this Arab. They ask God for His richest blessings to rest upon them, and when He asks a simple service of them they practically say, 'I don't run errands.' Surely we cannot wonder that such Christians are not promoted." — *I. Q. Moulton*.

THE GOLDEN RULE, *par excellence*. 12. Therefore. Because what follows is the summing up of all the previous precepts in this discourse, as love is the sum of the Ten Commandments. Because, also, you are children of God, and therefore should act like your Father. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. This is no new rule. It is found even in heathen writers, especially in the negative form, — as Confucius, Aristotle, Socrates, Seneca. It existed in the Old Testament long before Christ. See Lev. 19:18. What Jesus did was to bring it out in a clearer light, in a positive form, with new authority, with a universal application, and with the power that enables men to live according to it.

"The rule does not require us to do the things which they ask, but to act toward

them in the manner and spirit in which we should wish them to act toward us. This rule works in two ways : while directly it requires us to act toward others as we should wish them to act toward us, in spirit and implication it requires us to wish from others no more than we should be willing to render to them if our positions were reversed." — *Abbott*. This rule obeyed will settle all the difficult social questions of the world.

LESSON VII. — November 14.

THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF JESUS. — Matthew 8 and 9.

PRINT Matt. 8:5-18; 9:35-38.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.* — MATT. 9:35.

Devotional Reading : Hebrews 1:1-9.

Additional Material for Teachers : Mark 1:29-2:12; Luke 7:1-10.

Primary Topic : JESUS FORGIVING SINS.

Lesson Material : Matt. 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12.

Memory Verse : Forgive us our sins. Luke 11:4.

Junior Topic : JESUS HEALS A CENTURION'S SERVANT.

Lesson Material : Matt. 8:5-13.

Memory Verse : Matt. 8:8.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE RESPONSE OF JESUS TO HUMAN NEEDS.

Topic for Young People and Adults : CHRISTIANITY AND PHYSICAL NEEDS.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

This lesson is one that will be considered quite differently in the different classes.

The **Primary** children should learn from this lesson how ready Jesus is to forgive all who are sorry for their sins, and the stories can be used as illustrations of that fact.

In the **Junior** classes the story of the healing of the centurion's servant is given as the lesson, and the main portion of the time must be used in the study of the facts of the story, as illustrating the power of Christ to help those who appealed to him for aid.

A Bible hunt for facts showing just how Jesus responded during his life on earth to every human need which presented itself will be very interesting and valuable for the **Intermediate and Senior** classes, and they can be led from these concrete facts to the general lesson that he is still as ready to help every human being, whatever his need, or his sorrow.

The question of the influence of Christianity in the curing of the physical ills of the world, by a study during the week of the conditions in heathen coun-

tries where the Gospel has not penetrated, the increase of physical help to the poor and despised as the true spiritual character of Christianity has increased through the centuries, and the prominence of Christian people in the best of the charitable work of their cities will give plenty of intensely interesting material for the **Young People and Adults**.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Power and Authority of Jesus.

- I. MATTHEW'S ARRANGEMENT.
- II. THE ROMAN CENTURION, Matt. 8:5-13.
- III. A STORMY SEA AND A STORMY SOUL, Matt. 8:23-34.
- IV. FORGIVENESS, THEN HEALING, Matt. 9:1-8.
- V. LIFE FROM THE DEAD, Matt. 9:18-26.
- VI. THE RESPONSE OF JESUS TO HUMAN NEED, Matt. 8:1-4, 14-22; 9:9-17, 27-38.
- VII. CHRISTIANITY AND PHYSICAL NEEDS.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Orientalisms in the lesson stories.

Property versus men; illustrated by the story of the swine.

Why did forgiveness come before cure, in the case of the palsied man?

Not righteous but sinners: who are called?

Is Christianity that is limited to times of peril of great value?

Is religious devotion exercised because healing has been secured or is sought, a high grade of faith?

Compare missionary hospitals with those in our own land.

Which combines religion most with the healing?

Would it be possible to say that the one is following Christ only in form, and the other following in spirit?

Does the welfare work done by some hospitals raise them to the rank of Christian?

Is the elimination of the religious atmosphere from hospitals to be desired or to be regretted?

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Matthew, and on the parallel portions of the other Gospels. *Lives of Christ*. Books on the *Miracles of Jesus*, as for example, those by Trench, Spurgeon, Bruce, Macdonald, Taylor, Lang, Laidlaw. R. J. Cooke, D.D., *The Incarnation and Recent Criticism*, p. 36, etc., on miracles and nature. *Medical Men in the Time of Christ*, by G. R. N. Willson, M.D. *Miracle and Science*, Francis J. Lamb. *Faith and Health*, Charles R. Brown. Dr. Worcester's *Religion and Medicine*, and *The Christian Religion as a Healing Power*, etc.

5. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

I. MATTHEW'S ARRANGEMENT. The arrangement of Matthew's Gospel is topical rather than chronological. The first four chapters are practically in exact order of events. After that, until the latter part of the Gospel, it follows the general order, to a certain extent; but it groups the teachings and the miracles, in order to emphasize and illustrate the instructions and truths about the kingdom of heaven, and to show their connection and meaning in the life and work of Christ. This method is especially apparent in the collection of teachings called the Sermon on the Mount, which we have just been studying; and the group of miracles in the two chapters which are our lessons for to-day, proving the teacher's authority, and illustrating his teachings and his mission.

If one wishes to actually place these chapters in their chronological place in the Life of Christ, it is well to consult any good *Harmony of the Four Gospels*. The incidents of the leper (8 : 2-4), of the palsied man (9 : 2-8), of the call and feast of Matthew (9 : 9-17), as well as some other events, come, in their chronological order, before the Sermon on the Mount. The miracles of calming the sea, and curing the demoniac, and of raising the daughter of Jairus, were after the group of parables in Matthew 13, etc.

We will study first five of Jesus' more notable miracles, contained in these chapters, and then, with these as the foundation, find how Jesus responded then to the needs of those around him, and his work for the suffering to-day.

II. THE ROMAN CENTURION, Matt. 8 : 5-13. This incident occurred almost immediately after the Sermon on the Mount, in the midsummer of A.D. 28.

When he reached Capernaum, after coming down from the Mount of Beatitudes, a centurion, an officer in the Roman army about equivalent to our captain, besought Jesus, saying, Lord, showing at once his faith in the power of Jesus. **My servant**, his personal servant, confidential attendant, most probably a slave, as was the custom. **Lieth at home sick of the palsy**, paralysis. **Grievously tormented**. The word paralysis was used by ancients much more widely than to-day. It included not only what we call paralysis, which is not ordinarily particularly painful, but also cramps and lockjaw. Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* thinks this may possibly have been an acute case of spinal meningitis.

Jesus said, I will come and heal him. There was no hesitation.

The centurion answered, Lord, I am not worthy. . . . Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me : and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

10. When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven :

12. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way ; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

Then he gives the familiar illustration from military life. A captain, himself under orders, needs but to say the word to be obeyed. Surely Jesus, in his sphere, can do the same as I in mine.

And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled.

"Only twice do we read in the gospel that the Saviour marvelled : once at the unbelief of his fellow citizens at Nazareth (Mark 6 : 6), once at the *faith* of this heathen." — *Van Oosterzee*.

As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. As wide as his faith should be his blessing. It went farther than the physical healing ; he should receive more than the physical cure of his servant. The physical healings of Jesus were always the channels through which flowed spiritual blessings.

III. A STORMY SEA, AND A STORMY SOUL, Matt. 8 : 23-34. These events took place some months after the healing of the centurion's servant, in the autumn of A.D. 28, immediately after the seaside sermon in which he gave the wonderful "parables by the sea" of Matt. 13.

Jesus was weary, and after telling his disciples to row to the other side of the lake, he lay down to rest in the stern of the boat, "on a pillow," says Mark ; "that is in a little cabin, enjoying the deep, sweet repose consequent on natural exhaustion." — *Morrison*. Here he shows his human nature, as his stilling the tempest a short while after displayed his divine nature. The two elements together make the perfect Saviour.

A great tempest. Greek, *earthquake*, such a commotion of the marine elements as corresponds to an earthquake on land. These sudden and severe hurricanes are common on such landlocked lakes as that of Galilee.

His disciples came to him. This shows they had faith in him, although it was feeble. Note the variations in the report ; probably all were correct. One said one thing, another another. Some one puts it thus : Little Faith prayed, *Save us* ; Much Fear cried, *We perish* ; Distrust urged, *Carest thou not* ? More Faith said, *Lord* ; Discipleship called out *Teacher* ; Faint Hope cried, *Master, thou with authority*.

The whole made a vivid scene.

Jesus when aroused first rebuked the disciples, and then rebuked the winds and the sea, as a Master rebukes his servant for disobedience. Mark quotes his own words, "Peace, be still."

MIRACLES. God does not break, but uses, his laws of nature for the good of his children. Just as his children, in their small degree, are using the laws of nature, in making water almost literally "run up hill" ; to overcome the law of gravitation so that man in a heavier than air machine can fly miles above the earth, and remain there for hours ; to calm a tossing sea by the use of "oil upon the waters" ; so God, the great Creator, can use his laws, the one to overcome the other. He bears the same relation to the powers of nature as a watchmaker does to the watch when, without interfering with the law which he put into operation when he set the watch to running, he sets the hands to the right time.

I lift up a book, I turn on the water from the waterworks, and make a shower on my parched lawn or garden. I stop a part of the machinery in the factory, and

rescue a child caught in its wheels. These acts break no law of nature, they suspend none, they change none. They are simply the intervention of my personal will into the laws; using one law of nature to modify the other. Surely God, with his infinite power, can do the same kind of things which are done every day by his children, and as much the greater as his power and knowledge are greater than theirs.

The morning after the storm Jesus and his disciples landed on the southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, in the country of the Gadarenes. Here he found one or two possessed with devils, demons, unclean spirits. The difference between the statements of the number does not discredit the story, since one was undoubtedly the more prominent, and the other gospels, without denying that there were two, confined themselves to the story of the more remarkable. Similar facts occur frequently within our own knowledge.

DEMON-POSSESSION, whatever its cause, was closely allied to the wild, raving insanity known in every insane asylum. We do not know how spirits dwell in our bodies, nor how we can feel the influence of other human beings upon our own minds and souls; and yet it is a fact. As there are good and evil persons all around us, it is perfectly possible that there should be good and evil spirits around us, ready and able to suggest to us different courses of conduct. The question of "double personality" which has received so much attention during these more recent years, although as yet no great advance has been possible, may, when understood, throw great light on cases of this sort.

Art thou come hither to torment us before the time. "They seemed afraid lest they should be driven from their home in the man and sent homeless into the abyss, before the final victory of Christ over the world," and all the powers of darkness. "Herein the true devilish spirit speaks out, which counts it a torment not to be allowed to torment others, and an injury done to itself when it is no more permitted to be injurious to others." — *Trench*.

Suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. How they could enter into these we know not, but it is no more a mystery than the connection of mind and body with us. "There is no scientific objection to demoniacal possession of brutes." Jesus did not send the demons into the swine. He simply did not hinder it. He let things take their natural course, and held that no amount of property, in the scales of heaven, can weigh against one human soul. A message that is needed to-day.

IV. FORGIVENESS, THEN HEALING, Matt. 9:1-8. In May or June, A.D. 28, some weeks before the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus was teaching in Capernaum. The house was crowded to the doors and doubtless beyond. But here is somebody else who wants to get in. He must get in. And it is not only one man, but a group of five,—four carrying the fifth. Jesus has power to cure a man sick as this man is, with the palsy; we have brought him to Jesus in order to be cured; it is impossible to let anything stand in the way of our reaching Jesus. Let us in! But the crowd is too closely packed for any outside pressure to make any effect upon it.

Well, we'll take him up on the roof, and let him down into the room that way,—there must be some space close to the Teacher. At any rate it is impossible for us to return to our homes without accomplishing what we came here to do.



Court and Roof of Oriental House.

In the paved courtyard we see the well, the flat roof, the rooms surrounding a court covered by a veranda made from Oriental tiles. If Jesus was preaching in such a house he stood in the open recess at (A). The audience filled not only the rooms but the whole court. The man was let down through the veranda (B) in front of Jesus.

9:35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

And the man is taken to the roof ; a hole is made, which can be easily repaired later ; and he is let down at the very feet of Jesus, while the four friends lean down over the edge of the hole to see what is to be done for their friend.

And Jesus says, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee ! But that was not why the four friends had taken him to the Teacher ! He wanted to be made well. And the learned men of the law who stood near Jesus as he spoke, also criticized him, " He is blaspheming," for only God can forgive sins.

But Jesus then proved his power to forgive sins by the cure of the man, — Whether it is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise and walk ? Put the emphasis on the words " to say." One is as easy to say as the other ; but the power to accomplish is far different.

WHY DID FORGIVENESS COME FIRST ? 1. Doubtless Jesus, who could read the heart of man, knew it really came first to the man himself.

2. Without forgiveness, which would include repentance, without which there is no real forgiveness, even the bodily cure might not be permanent. Dr. Cabot, in speaking of nervous disorders, says, " In the milder cases cure is as easy (and as difficult) as the cure of a bad temper, of shyness, of stage fright, of stammering, or of fear based on mistake. In the stubborn cases cure means a radical reconstruction of character, and is as difficult, though as possible, as that.

" A religious background and spirit in the use of psychotherapy is important, because religion means the most searching, inclusive, and profound activity possible for the individual. It enables us to reach the depths of a personality and liberate its most powerful motives. Prayer and education should go hand in hand."

3. Forgiveness added the greatest blessings to the cure. It gave him the opportunity to be active in the service of the gospel, to make known the spiritual blessings Jesus had bestowed upon him, by means of the renovation of his body.

V. LIFE FROM THE DEAD, Matt. 9 : 18-26. This miracle took place soon after the stilling of the tempest, on Jesus' return to Capernaum.

As Jesus was walking along by the sea, with multitudes again around him, there came a certain ruler of the synagogue, an important man among the Jews. And worshipped him, did reverence to him in the Oriental way. My daughter, " my little daughter " (Mark), is even now dead. " He left her at the last gasp ; he knew she could scarcely be living now." But come, either to heal, or to comfort us in our trouble.

On the way to the house messengers came, saying, " Thy daughter is dead ; why troublest thou the Master any further " (Mark). But Jesus said to him at once, without giving him any chance to doubt, " Fear not, only believe."

And the father's faith was justified, for although the child had died before the Master reached the house, she was, by the divine power residing in him, completely restored : a consummate proof of the authority and the power of Jesus, over even death itself.

VI. THE RESPONSE OF JESUS TO HUMAN NEED, Matt. 8 : 1-4, 14-22 ; 9 : 9-17, 27-38. The two chapters of Matthew which we study to-day are crowded full of heavenly deeds of power and lovingkindness " expressing a comprehensive view of Christ's power " over sickness of every kind ; " a series of ' mighty deeds ' of love, showing forth not only his grace, but his power to heal the diseases of the body, power over the realm of nature, power over the unseen world of spirit, power to forgive and save from sin, power to restore lost faculties, and to conquer death itself. Such are the appropriate signs of his kingdom spread out before us.

" They are signs of the kingdom of heaven, just such signs of it as the intelligent reason demands ; for how otherwise is it possible for One who comes to save to show that he is able to do it ? How could the people have been expected to welcome him as a Saviour unless he had taken some means to make it evident that he had the power as well as the will to save ? " — John Monro Gibson, D.D.

Matthew makes this a third division in his analysis of the mission of Jesus on earth. First, he went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, places of regular religious services. (Matt. 4 : 17, 23.) " The Teaching was THE NEW LIGHT."

36. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few;

38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Second, he preached everywhere the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, urging them to repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and only by repentance could they enter it. "The Preaching was THE NEW POWER, power not of the sword, but of the Word, the power of persuasion." (Matt. 4 : 23 ; 5 : 1-7 : 28.) The Sermon on the Mount was the great example and culmination of the teaching and the preaching ; instruction in the great essential truths by which we learn what God would have us to do and to be, our guide to heaven, and our guide during our lives on earth.

Third, he healed all manner of disease, and all manner of sickness among the people. (Matt. 4 : 23.) The two chapters in to-day's lesson illustrate and sum up this division of Jesus' mission.

"Heavenly light, Heavenly power, Heavenly healing — these are the weapons of the new warfare ; these the regalia of the new kingdom."

"It is Daybreak on the shores of Galilee."

"The Sun of Righteousness has risen, with healing in his wings."

HEALING ALL MANNER OF DISEASE. We should gain a clear conception of this peculiar, rich, and abundant miraculous accompaniment of the Son of man. It surrounds him like the halos the old painters cause to radiate around their pictures of Christ. A considerable portion of the Gospels is occupied with accounts of miracles. Thirty-six are described in the Gospels, half of them repeated in more than one Gospel ; so that there are 67 reports of distinct miracles, besides the large number noticed (as in the verses of these chapters accompanying the topic heading above), but not recorded in detail.

"Christ cures the sick, not by what He does to them, but by what He does in them, and by what He thus arouses them to do in and for themselves. God delivers us from our pride, our appetite, our vanity, our covetousness, not by taking from us our sinful appetites and passions, not by plunging us impotent into an angel-troubled bath and bringing us out potent, we passive all the time, but by stirring up within us a resolute will and purpose to vanquish every sin and unworthiness, and by giving us the power in the effort to exercise it. . . . Let no man pray for victory unless he is willing God should answer by giving him a battle to fight." — Lyman Abbott, D.D.

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS. 36. When he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion for them. "The ministry of Jesus was one of compassion. . . . Everywhere and always Jesus stands before us as full of compassion. And he has in no respect changed. His attitude and feeling are the same as when he was on earth. . . . He is still touched with all the feelings of human infirmities.

"Christ has compassion for men as human beings. His compassionate treatment of man emphasized man's superiority and worth. . . .

"Christ has compassion on men because of the needs of their nature. In his human kinship with man, Christ knew the physical experiences of man. He knew by his own experience hunger, thirst, weariness, pain and sorrow. . . .

"Jesus has compassion on the multitude because of their ignorance. . . . His teaching was the glad tidings of the Gospel. Graciously and assuringly, he spoke to them of God in terms so simple that they could easily understand. Lovingly he told them of Salvation and instructed them in the things of the Kingdom. To the careworn and weary he brought new strength and comfort saying : 'Be not anxious, but trust in God, who knows the things you need.' To the heavily burdened he offered rest ; to the sorrowing he offered peace ; to the sinful he spoke of pardon. . . . As the Light of Life to them he revealed the great truths of God, and illumined the way so that they might no longer walk in darkness. . . .

"Jesus has compassion on the multitude because of their lack of right leadership. . . . Is it not so to-day ? Is not this the prevailing condition of humanity ? . . . Let it be our task to bring wandering and weary souls under the

shepherding care of Him who ministers both to soul and body, and who lays his healing hand in love and compassion upon the diseased and suffering.

"May Jesus fill our hearts with like compassion. The least we can do is to minister to the physical needs of men and alleviate their bodily sufferings; but if our ministry stops there, it will stop just short of what men most need." — *From a Sermon by Rev. Gorham Easterbrook.*

VII. CHRISTIANITY AND PHYSICAL NEEDS. "'The good die young' was a saying expressive of the sickly sentimentality of the last century, which fed youngsters wriggling with vitality upon Sunday School stories of impossibly good children slowly fading from earth. To-day we realize that such stories were as unchristian as they were untrue. Neurotics never ought to have been held up as examples to healthy humans. The Greek, with his 'sound mind in a sound body,' was far nearer to the teaching of Jesus than were these.

"Jesus by his example as well as his words taught that God, who wills moral good, wills also physical health. The sanity of Jesus is shown in the fact that he did not deny disease; his compassion in the fact that he tried to substitute for it health. . . .

"Disease, instead of being a sign of piety, is evidence that we or our ancestors have been breaking laws, God's laws of health. The body is not the soul, but a sick body can make a soul sick. . . .

"Not only does a normal mind require a healthy body, but our thoughts are all the time not only building up or undermining our physical health, but even affecting the very structure of our body. . . . Thoughts of anger, hatred, grief, fear, anxiety, worry, jealousy, sensuality all tend to destroy health and produce disease. . . . Those who persist in thinking such thoughts will sooner or later suffer from them in their bodies. . . . Thoughts of joy, peace, contentment, love (not lust) tend to build up the body and to promote health. While 'certain cults prevalent in the world to-day' have exaggerated the part that these play, this should not blind us to their real and vital power to upbuild or to destroy." — *C. Russell Williams, Ph.D., in Pilgrim Magazine.*

MISSIONARY HEALING. "All the experience of modern missionaries in the East goes to show the wisdom of the method employed by Jesus Christ and his apostles in giving attention to diseased bodies as a means of access to diseased souls; the very best means of opening the heart to religious influences. The medical mission was inaugurated by the Lord himself as a proof of his divine ministry." — *Henry Clay Trumbull, in Studies in Oriental Social Life.*

"Missionaries, men and women, who have had no medical training, have given themselves to caring for the suffering and to the distribution of relief [in the World War]. Contending forces have surged around the missionary premises, and national flags have changed, but there the missionaries have remained, steadily performing their God-given task — saving life, giving comfort and inspiring confidence and hope.

"These American missionaries of all communions, men and women, are doing more to-day to commend Christianity to the people of all classes in Asia, Africa and the Near East than all our arms and armaments and armies could ever achieve, and they are doing it without noise or bluster or boasting and in the spirit with which Jesus Christ went about in his earthly ministry doing good." — *Daily Paper.*

The True Life. "The Rev. J. H. Jowett says, 'It is when you get home from your work at night, and there's the promise of slippered ease; and inviting music is at hand, or an alluring book at your elbow; and you feel the fascination of it all — and then you hear the cry of human need, like a moaning wind down a dreary street, and you rise, tired though you are with honest work, and you put on your coat again, and you go out into the cheerless night, and to a still more cheerless slum, to take Christ and cheer to the victim of night — it is then you begin to live.' Comfortable or comforting evenings, which shall it be with you and me?

"And if thou wouldst seek to make thy life worth while first —

"Ask God to give thee skill
In comfort's art,
That thou mayst consecrate be
And set apart
Unto a life of sympathy.
For heavy is the weight of ill
In every heart;
And comforters are needed much
Of Christ-like touch."

— *Record of Christian Work.*

If you would be sure of the difference between the physical condition of mankind under Christianity and under heathen or unchristian influences, it is only necessary to study the history of ancient Greece and Rome ; or of those parts of the modern world still under the sway of heathenism or Mohammedanism. A little girl was playing with her toy village when her father came up to her. "Is that a Christian village or a heathen village ?" he asked. "A Christian village," answered the child. "How would you make it into a heathen village ?"

The little girl looked at her toy, then slowly took away the church building. But that was not enough. Gradually, through her father's hints, she took away the schools, the hospital, the pleasant little park and the best of the houses. "But there is nothing left," she mournfully remarked.

Read any accounts of a missionary's early years in a heathen country and you will read of neglect and cruelty to the sick and the aged, — children left to die because deformed, the aged left by the roadside because no longer able to earn their own support. Where in any part of the heathen or Mohammedan world could you find a hospital, or a doctor save the ignorant exorcist, or any nursing, save for the most wealthy ? They are either few and very far between, or else conspicuous by their entire absence. Only upon the advent of the Christian missionary does the hospital, nursing, or compassion for the sick appear in a country.

And the care of the poor, the giving of bread to the hungry, not as a matter of throwing a crumb to a beggar, but of raising them out from their miserable condition, — where do we see it ? Only in those lands where Christ is acknowledged Lord. All the physical needs of humanity are better cared for the better and fuller the reality of the Christianity of the community. There are many places, alas, in Christian lands, where they are allowed to suffer without relief ; but the truth is still the same : The more truly the heart of the community is Christian, the more truly does it care for its poor, its sick, and its sorrowful. In other words, The more truly a community acknowledges Christ as its Lord and Master, the more truly does it do the works of Christ.

LESSON VIII. — November 21.

THE TWELVE SENT FORTH. — Matthew 10.

PRINT Matt. 10:5-8, 29-31, 37-42.

(May Be Used with Missionary Applications.)

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.* — MATT. 9:37, 38.

Devotional Reading : Isaiah 40 : 1-11.

Additional Material for Teachers : Luke 9 : 1-6 ; 10 : 1-20.

Primary Topic : JESUS SENDING OUT HELPERS.

Lesson Material : Matt. 10 : 1-8, 29-31, 42.

Memory Verse : Freely ye have received, freely give. Matt. 10 : 8.

Junior Topic : THE TWELVE APOSTLES SENT FORTH.

Lesson Material : Matt. 10 : 1-10.

Memory Verses : Matt. 10 : 7, 8.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : HERALDS OF THE KING.

Topic for Young People and Adults : RECRUITING CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

Additional Material : Matt. 9 : 35-38.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

"We are all missionaries, the sent ones of the King and not our fields but our faithfulness matters." — *George L. McKay.*

The lesson for to-day should be a missionary lesson in all grades. Show the scholars how Jesus sent out his disciples to preach the gospel to all they met, and how later he told them to go into all the world to preach this good

news. Make the application according to the abilities of each class. Some can be taught that our lives and our everyday words are to some extent a telling about Jesus to the people who see and hear us. Others can learn about the heathen children, and how even the few cents we can spare will do a great deal towards telling them about our Master. The older classes can learn more about the missionaries, and their work for Christ and for the world, and the part we can take in the work by our money and our prayers.

As the classes grow older the personal question as to whether we ourselves can do a more definite missionary work will come forward. How can we follow ourselves the command of the Master? Are we called to his service in home missionary or foreign missionary fields? How can we know whether we are so called? How can we help to get workers, if we ourselves are not able to go? How does the call of God come to the worker? and many other kindred questions.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time.—The Twelve were sent on their tour the last of February or early in March, A.D. 29.

Place.—The place of appointment is unknown. The place of preaching was throughout Galilee.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Twelve: their names and characteristics.
The value of working two by two.

Why were they to confine their work to the Jews?
The instructions to the Twelve.
Freely received; freely give.
Answering their own prayer for laborers.
Varieties of Christian work to-day.
Home Missionary work: of how many sorts?
Foreign Missions in war-time.
Statemanship in Foreign Missions.
Interrelation of Home and Foreign Missions.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Books on the Apostles: Bruce's *Training of the Twelve. The College of the Apostles*, by James R. Vance, D.D. All the *Bible Dictionaries. The Apostles as Every Day Men*, by Dr. R. Ellis Thompson.

Books on Missions: *The Growth of the Kingdom*, by Sidney and Edward Gulick. Secretary Barton's *The Missionary and His Critics* and his *Human Progress through Missions. The New Era in Asia*, by Dr. Sherwood Eddy. *The Missionary Review of the World*.

Write to your own denominational missionary societies for literature, both in the forms of books, pamphlets, and periodicals, both Home and Foreign. Ask your City Missionary Society, also.

THE PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: Christian Work and Workers.

- I. THE GREAT NEED OF WORKERS, Matt. 9: 37, 38.
- II. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE, Matt. 10: 1-42.
- III. HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONS TO-DAY.
- IV. EVERY CHRISTIAN A MISSIONARY.

I. THE GREAT NEED OF WORKERS, Matt. 9: 37, 38. The last two verses of our lesson for last Sunday we did not consider there, as they are so much more closely connected with to-day's lesson. "So far the King himself has done nearly all the work of the kingdom. It has grown upon Him so that He can no longer do it without assistance."—*Gibson*. In the meantime he has been training his twelve disciples, so that they might be able to do the same sort of work as he himself had done in their presence.

Jesus had been looking at the great multitude who gathered around him, according to their custom, — a multitude eager for the words of life but without leaders who could lead them into the true spiritual kingdom. They were like sheep without a shepherd, — unable either to protect themselves from their enemies, or even to find their necessary (spiritual) food and drink. They were like a harvest going to waste because there were no laborers to gather it. This point is well illustrated by the condition of affairs in the United States during the war, and especially in 1917, before the matter was fully understood. The farmers had an abundant harvest; food for America and her allies was spoiling in the fields; but for several reasons it was in many places impossible to obtain laborers to gather the harvest; and often some or a part of it was an entire loss, on that account.

The world without the Gospel is the perfect application of this truth. The work

5. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

is vast; uncounted millions are going down to death ignorant of the message Christ came to this earth to bring to men. And this is because the Christian Church is not yet fully awake to the immensity of the harvest, and the need of laborers. And still more because so few individually feel it laid upon them to answer their own prayers. "When we honestly pray God to send out laborers, and our own circumstances allow us to go, we are to expect that he will send us." — *President Finney*. The prayer too often is, "Lord, here am I; send *him*."

Jesus told his followers to **pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest**; and the following verse shows how their prayer was to be answered.

II. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE, Matt. 10: 1-42. We have frequently and recently studied the names and characteristics of the Twelve Apostles. (For those classes whose knowledge is naturally small on this point the teacher should study the books on the Apostles named above, or read again the helps and hints given in the *Select Notes* for 1918, and earlier years, where this subject was studied. The space in this book is too limited for us to give any detailed account of them here.)

1. *The Twelve were to go forth two by two.* Why? Because each would supplement the work of the other. They would aid and encourage each other. Two is always more than twice one.

2. *The Twelve were to go only to the Jews.* Why? Because the Jews had already been trained in the worship of one God. To begin with the Gentiles, — or even to have at first included them, — would have intensified the prejudice of the Jews against it. They were best acquainted with their own people. The work among the Jews was large enough for them; the work among the heathen was even then unlimited.

3. *The Twelve were both to preach and heal.* Why? They were to tell the Good News, that God had sent His Son to save the world. The Kingdom of God was beginning, come and join it. Then they were to help the people in their bodily needs as a proof and illustration of the spiritual blessings they proclaimed. They practically said: Here are some of the fruits of the Gospel we are preaching; come and taste them.

Freely ye have received, freely give. Jesus had charged nothing for what he had done either for them or for the multitude he taught and healed. So his disciples also must give as freely to those to whom they were to go. To take money for their miracles would ruin their work among the people, would teach selfishness instead of love, and cause them to be regarded as mere exorcists, instead of the preachers of free salvation with divine credentials. Moreover, only as we have received God's salvation freely, as a free gift, shall we be able to give freely, and preach a large, free, unearned pardon and new life.

HOW LONG SHALL I GIVE?

"Go break to the needy sweet charity's bread;
For giving is living," the angel said.
'And must I be giving again and again?'
My peevish and pitiless answer ran.
'Oh, no,' said the angel, piercing me through,
'Just give till the Master stops giving to you.'"

4. *The Twelve were to go as ordinary men.* They were not to wear the peculiar prophet's garb, not take any extra money or clothes. They were to trust God and to depend upon the people whom they served for the necessary support. They were not to be considered beggars, for they earned their support; they were to give freely, but those whom they helped were also to give freely. This is exactly in accord with the principles on which ministers and missionaries receive their support, and to a large extent, teachers and doctors. They do not work for pay. But their supporters' business is to give them a comfortable living in order that they should give

29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me : and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39. He that findeth his life shall lose it : and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

40. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

41. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

themselves wholly to their work. And this support should be given freely, abundantly, so that they shall not be perplexed about their living, or their families ; and so that they shall have the best means and aids for doing their work.

They were not to try to find for themselves the most comfortable home. They were not to go from house to house (Luke 10 : 7). They were to find when they first



Jesus Appoints the Twelve.

came to any city or village the best family for their purpose, — one well known for its character, which would both welcome the laborer, and aid so far as was possible in his work.

They were to be considerate while in this house, eating and drinking such things as were given them (Luke 10 : 7), not asking more or different from those around them.

They were to do nothing against those who would not receive them or their preaching ; but

when they left they were to **shake off the dust of their feet**, in the Oriental manner, as a testimony that they had no part or lot with them. This was not to be in either anger or revenge ; it was merely a statement of the fact that those who refuse to receive the gospel and the Christian worker who brings it have no part or lot in the kingdom of God, here or hereafter.

5. *The Twelve were to suffer with their Lord.* They would be hated, persecuted, killed, for the sake of the Master whom they served. But *Fear Not*. If they kill your body they cannot kill your soul. If your Master has been persecuted, hated, and vilified, should not his servants also expect the same. And *he that findeth his life*, — he that would give up everything to save his mortal body from death, *shall*

lose it, shall lose all that makes this life worth while. And he that loseth his life, this mortal life, for my sake, the necessary condition, shall find it, — shall find the larger, truer, fuller life of the Spirit, here, and also hereafter, in the Father's house.

III. HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONS TO-DAY. For two reasons it is impossible to do justice here to this topic. First, the field of modern missions is so vast that the time of a single lesson cannot begin to cover it. Second, because it is essential that each should be well grounded in the special work of his own denomination. There should be a previous preparation of this topic by several of the members of the class, so that the short, concise reports of what they have learned may give to the rest the greatest amount of knowledge in the short time of the Sunday School hour.

But it is also essential that all should know at least something about the general missionary work of the united Church of Christ, to whatever branch of that Church the actual labor has been delegated.

This period of the great World War has been a testing time for many people and for many things. The very Christian religion itself has been thought by some to have been on trial. Money has been poured out by billions to carry on the war. Many have thought religion and Christianity should remain in the background until the stress was over.

But it is interesting to know that through all the confusion and disorder and danger the missionaries have been faithful in carrying on their regular work so far as it was possible, and in helping the people in every possible way. The colleges at Constantinople and Beirut were open, and many schools in their vicinity. The missionaries have become heroes and heroines, not only in continuing their work under the stress of danger, but in enlarging it to do the Master's work of healing and comforting, as well as of educating and preaching.

"Since Dr. Henry Morgenthau returned from his ambassadorship in Turkey he has spoken to all kinds of audiences concerning his remarkable experiences in Turkey. The other day some one in the audience possibly of a caviling turn of mind interrupted him with the question, 'What about the missionaries in Turkey?' The former ambassador waited a moment, he seemed to be powerfully moved. Then came his quiet but firm response, 'When the roll of saints and heroes in this war shall be made up — and it will be a long one, for many valorous deeds have been performed — the names of the American missionaries in Turkey will be at the head of the list.'

"The man who said that is a Hebrew actively identified with a prominent synagogue in New York City, and loyal to the faith of his fathers. All the more significant and eloquent therefore is this spontaneous tribute to the men and women of whose self-sacrificing deeds and pure lives Mr. Morgenthau was a constant observer during his years in Turkey.

"Do not forget this incident when any one challenges the value of the foreign missionary work or depreciates the caliber of the workers."

"All Barriers Being Burned Away. In speaking of the missionaries after the war, Dr. Barton maintained that this war is demonstrating the need of the Christian missionaries in every corner of the non-Christian world. No longer can any nation or people remain excluded from the rest of the world. Barriers are breaking down and we now know that when one nation suffers all suffer with it. Many who have made no profession of Christianity recognize that the Christian missionaries are the apostles of individual integrity, social righteousness and national justice. They represent that true democracy which recognizes the right of the individual as well as the brotherhood of man. The institutions missionaries have established in the name of Christianity have stood the tests of war and to-day remain the bulwark of good international understanding and a foundation for permanent, international peace. These have established the unchallenged basis for mutual good will between the East and the West and from these have come those individual bands that bind divergent races and nations together in mutual confidence.

"Whatever changes may take place in governments and national boundaries, there will be a greater demand still for foreign missionaries and their institutions of education, mercy, and religion, than ever before in all the history of modern missions. It is only these that can hold the world steady and true to the principles of the unity of the race and to the proposition that the Creator endowed every creature of His with the right to live and to enjoy the liberty wherewith God has made him free." — *Boston Transcript.*

What Is Modern Missions? "Dr. Barton tells of travelling with a famous lecturer, who in one breath said he 'didn't believe in foreign missions' and in the next

breath was enthusiastic in his praise of hospitals, colleges, schools and industrial plants.

" 'Well,' I said, 'you have just given me material for one of the best missionary pamphlets I ever read.'

" 'Oh,' said he, 'if you call that missions, of course there is no fool who could question for a minute that they are the greatest enterprise in the world.'

" 'Well, we do call that missions.' "

And the whole world is awaking to Christianity. Read Dr. Sherwood Eddy's book, *The New Era in Asia*, and the reports of his later visits to China. It is only recently that the entire charge of education in one of the provinces of China was given into the hands of Christian missionaries; not for them to support, but for them to direct, and to administrate.

" A Buddhist priest in Korea said to a missionary: 'I want my children to be Christians. It is too late for me, but the day is coming when all Korea is going to be Christian.' "

" Do you know:

" That the largest Presbyterian church in the world is among the converted cannibals of West Africa?

" That African Christians only a decade out of savagery gave, in the year 1917, five dollars for each communicant, yet in Africa wages are only ten cents a day? [Compare with the churches of the United States.]

" That when John Springer and his wife used their furlough to walk 1500 miles across Africa to the West Coast, they met far out in the wilderness a boy who had been converted at a mission when he was a slave, and had been praying for seven years for a missionary to come to his people? " — *Record of Christian Work.*

" A group of Africans watched a missionary make a table from rough timber. One of them said, 'Master, I thought God made these things and gave them to you white men; now I see you do it yourselves.' 'I told him,' said the missionary, 'that our ancestors were once savage and knew nothing of handicraft, but through our contact with God we'd been given wisdom to do these things.' Then at once the African asked, 'Master, if you have done this, why cannot we?' There is no limit to the opportunities through which the power of the cross can reach a darkened mind." — *Record of Christian Work.*

"Is it nothing to you, O ye Christians,
That Africa walks in the night?
That Christians at home deny them
The blessed gospel light?
The cry goes up this morning
From a broken-hearted race of slaves,
And seven hundred every hour
Sink into Christless graves.
Is it nothing to you, O ye Christians?
Will ye say ye have naught to do?
Millions in Africa dying unsaved,
And is it nothing to you?"

"In India's faraway land
There are thousands of people pleading
For a touch of a Saviour's hand.
They are groping and trying to find him;
And although He is ready to save,
Eight hundred precious souls each hour
Sink into a Christless grave.
Is it nothing to you, O ye Christians,
Can you say you have naught to do?
Millions in India dying unsaved!
And is it nothing to you?"

And this is not all. Home missions has received the same impetus. The multitudes of illiterates in our own country, whether of foreign birth or of old American stock; those who have lived so retired from the world of men that they have not known anything that has been going on in the world around them; those in the slums of our cities who hardly know that there is a God; all are being gathered up into one great body and sent over the sea to fight for liberty. Schools for the non-English speaking privates are established in very many places; the chaplains in America and at the front are ready with their words of counsel and of help and of teaching about God and right. These people will never go back to their homes as ignorant of God and the Christian religion as they came from them. Their homes will feel the effect for many years to come.

The immense sums raised for the relief of suffering, for the Red Cross work, for the Y. M. C. A. work, for the sufferers of Belgium and Armenia are having their natural result of interesting those who give in the work that is being done with their money. And the opening of the purse strings for these things seems to have made them easier to open for the many causes at home. During the late epidemic of influenza the unselfishness of the workers was freely commented upon. And it seems that the heart as well as the purse of the world is more open to the call of the needy.

IV. EVERY CHRISTIAN A MISSIONARY. Not every Christian is a foreign missionary ; although with the great number of foreigners in our midst we might almost say that. Not every Christian needs to go away from his own home. You can do more with the people next you than with any other set of persons. "All philanthropy and humane service in which the Spirit of Christ can utter himself constitute a necessary and beneficent part of missionary work. Such expressions of the Christian spirit are irrepressible, and they are characteristic. Whether medical missions and charitable activities are proper agencies of the missionary enterprise are senseless questions. They cannot be prevented. If missionaries see widows burned and children slaughtered and villages ravaged in slave raids, and famine orphans and Christ's sheep scattered abroad with no man caring, they are going to care, and agitation and action are as certain as the love of Christ. And such services are themselves manifestations of Christ. They are original to Christianity. The non-Christian peoples recognize this. 'There is plenty of scope for active work,' said the leading social reform paper of Madras, 'not only for policemen, but for earnest men and women, of course among Christians. Our countrymen must pardon us for this piece of plain speaking, as they have never shown the least anxiety to reclaim the fallen. For "once fallen, always fallen," would appear to be their maxim.' All pure unselfishness preaches Christ. Indeed, it is the only way he can be preached. No words can speak Christ to men as words can speak him when pictured also in deeds. Many of the non-Christian peoples are kindergarten peoples. Acts must put content into words for them. The love of Christ must be interpreted to them by the vision of a man in whom Christ is loving them."

"A dying Civil War veteran recently called his only son to his bedside and said : 'Your great-great-grandfather died in the Revolution ; your great-grandfather died in the War of 1812 ; and I was in the Civil War with four brothers, three of whom were killed. I want you to enlist and keep up the fighting honor of your family.'

"There is a goal, bearing a higher inscription than 'For My Country.' It reads 'For My Saviour.' A fighting honor gained for Christ includes a fighting honor for your family and your country."

"No Christian life is worth anything in the sight of God or before the people that does not lay hold of you in such a way as to put you to doing some definite Christian work." — *Len G. Broughton*.

"Work for God counts. He asks His people to do the work ; He will take care of the harvest." — *John T. Faris*.

"The higher we ascend the broader the outlook ; and Paul had a missionary Gospel for all, because he went high enough. His headquarters were Heaven, not Jerusalem. To Paul, foreign missions were a mere matter of altitude. If we live little parish-pump lives, then our sky-line is contracted, but if, on the contrary, we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, then, looking down from His viewpoint, the whole earth, as a lost unit, is in full and fair view." — *Dan Crawford*.

"The question is not, Will the heathen be lost if they do not hear the Gospel ? but Shall we be saved if we do not take it to them ?" — *Spurgeon*.

"Finally, make yourself realize the *despicable spirit* shown by those who want to *get everything* from Christ and *give nothing* to him." A man was once heard to say, "I've been a member of the church for fifty years, and it never has cost me anything yet." Untrue for even the poorest and youngest of Christ's followers. It is true and blessed that the very poorest may come and receive the blessing without silver and gold. But the man who has money and spends it not ; the one who is unwilling to deny himself one little pleasure, one little comfort, one little necessity for the love of Christ and his suffering world, — he will find that in the end it will cost him his soul.

LESSON IX. — November 28.

HOW JESUS WAS RECEIVED. — Matthew II and 12.

PRINT Matt. 11 : 1-6, 16-19, 25-30 ; 12 : 14.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* — MATT. 11 : 28.

Devotional Reading : Isa. 53 : 1-6.

Additional Material for Teachers : Luke 7 : 18-35 ; 10 : 13-15, 21, 22 ; 11 : 14-26, 29-32.

Primary Topic : THE KIND DEEDS OF JESUS.

Lesson Material : Matt. 11 : 1-61 ; 12 : 9-13.

Memory Verse : Jesus . . . went about doing good. Acts 10 : 38.

Junior Topic : FRIENDS AND ENEMIES OF JESUS.

Lesson Material : Matt. 11 : 1-30.

Memory Verses : Matt. 11 : 28-30.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : CHOOSING JESUS AS OUR TEACHER.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE RESPONSE OF MEN TO THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

Such a lesson as to-day makes it necessary for each teacher to select those portions for full treatment which will be most appropriate to the age and attainment of his pupils.

The **Younger Classes** should use this lesson as a means of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the story of the life of Jesus Christ, how he went about doing good to all he met, and how he invited all to come to him to get the help they needed. The **Juniors** can add to this the study of how some opposed him, were his enemies, and why.

In the **Intermediate and Senior classes** there is here another chance for a Decision Day, if the matter has not been settled already. Shall we choose Jesus as our Master and our Teacher? What grounds are there for our choice, and on what principles can we choose? Draw an analogy between our choice of teachers in school and college.

The **Young People and Adults** can broaden the question to the historical response to Christianity; the response in heathen lands; the eagerness with which people listen in our own land, and the story of the war and its effect upon the religion of the men.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time and Place. — Since the arrangement of Matthew's Gospel is logical rather than chronological, the incidents and teachings of these verses do not belong to the same period, or to the same place. They come at various times between May or June, A.D. 28 and December, A.D. 29; and in various places, principally in Galilee. If the chronological order is desired, consult the Harmony in the front of this volume.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Matthew, for example: *The Expositor's Greek Testament*; Professor Gibson's *Gospel of Matthew*; Lyman Abbott's *Matthew*; *The American Commentary: Matthew*. *Devotional Hours with the Bible*, by Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D. Maclaren's *Expositions of Scripture: Matthew*.

Lives of Christ. On John the Baptist, *The Two St. Johns of the New Testament*, by Professor Stalker.

On choosing Christ, see Pizarro's Choice, in Prescott's *Conquest of Peru*, I., p. 203; "The Two Feasts of Cyrus," in Abbott's *Cyrus the Great*. Pres. Stanley Hall's *Study of Fears*. Joseph Cook's "Conscience."

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The greatness of John the Baptist.
How to conquer our doubts.
Why was Jesus' answer the best possible one?
Why Christ's yoke is easy.
The world's rest, and Christ's.
Christ and the Sabbath.
Why men opposed Christ in his time.
Why men now oppose Christ.
The response of men to-day to Christianity.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : How Jesus Was and Is Received.

- I. THE CREDENTIALS OF JESUS' MISSION, Matt. 11 : 1-15.
- II. THE INVITATION OF JESUS TO ALL MEN, Matt. 11 : 28-30.
- III. JESUS REJECTED BY HIS GENERATION, Matt. 11 : 16-27 ; 12 : 1-47.
- IV. CHOOSING JESUS AS OUR TEACHER, Matt. 12 : 46-50.
- V. THE RESPONSE OF MEN TO THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.

I. THE CREDENTIALS OF JESUS' MISSION, Matt. 11 : 1-15. *The Discouraged Prophet.* John the Baptist was a brave man, a hero. He had been such all

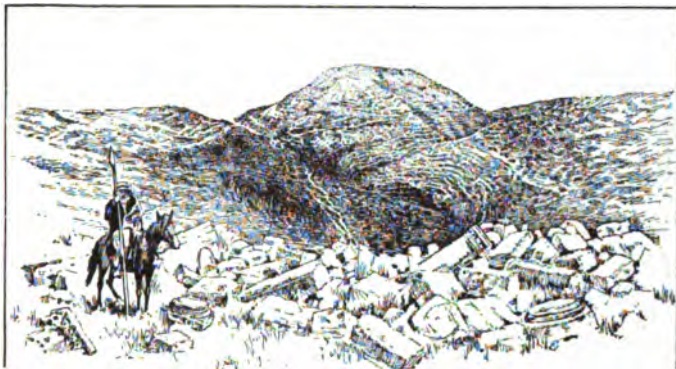
1. AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

2. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3. And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

through his active career, denouncing the great as well as the humble for their offences against the kingdom of God.

But there came a time when he must face martyrdom in order to do his duty, for as Elijah faced king Ahab with his accusations so John must denounce King Herod for his unnatural crime which was bringing ruin on the people. John could not effectively denounce the sins of the people if he let sins in high places go unrebuked.



The Hill Macherus — The Site of Herod's Palace. From a photograph.

John, therefore, on account of his faithfulness to duty, had been imprisoned in the Castle of Macherus, eight or nine miles east of the Dead Sea, where the ruins of a citadel with two dungeons may still be seen.

After several months of this imprisonment John became discouraged. This was due to several things : (1) Physical weakness and ill health, caused by the reaction from his intense labors and his confinement in a damp, unhealthy dungeon. He was a Bedouin of the desert taken from the open air and put in prison. (2) The disappointment at the apparent failure of his life, and the end of his hopes. His life ending in its very prime, after only two years of labor for the Kingdom. (3) The different picture presented by Jesus from John's ideal of the Messiah. (4) The thought that Jesus had forsaken him, his friend and helper. He hears of mighty works Jesus is doing only a hundred miles away, in Galilee ; he is preaching deliverance to the captive ; why does he not deliver this captive in Castle Macherus ? (5) Another cause was the depression produced by the reaction after his long-continued nervous strain in his exalted labors. Almost every worker for God has had these times of depression, as every preacher will testify.

John honestly doubted whether he had not been wrong as to the Messiahship of Jesus. Was he after all just another prophet ? And was John also mistaken in thinking that he himself was the forerunner of the Christ ? Were the long years still to pass without the fulfilment of the promise ?

Going to the Right Source. That this doubt was an honest one is proved by the method John used to investigate the truth. He was perfectly open about it. He did not set his disciples, like modern detectives, on Jesus' trail, and weigh the evidence thus gathered. He did not go to various persons of different classes for their opinion of Jesus, and compare and test him in that way. He sent directly to Jesus himself, asking him a point blank question : **Art thou he that should come, the promised Messiah whose forerunner I supposed I was, or do we look for another, of a different**

4. Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see :

5. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

28. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

kind ? This shows John's faith in the integrity of Jesus, even though he had begun to doubt his Messiahship.

Doubts Set at Rest. Jesus did not give them a direct answer. He simply went on with his ministry of love and mercy, that the delegation might see what his work was, and see for themselves how fully he answered the description of the Messiah in the old prophets. What they saw were the very things which Isaiah had foretold of the Messianic times (Isa. 35 : 4-6 ; 29 : 18, 19 ; 42 : 7 ; 61 : 1-3, etc.).

Then Jesus turned to the two messengers and said Go, return to John, tell John again those things which ye do hear and see. They speak louder for me than any words I could speak for myself, and they will set at rest any honest doubt ; for they are the things the Messiah should come to this earth to do. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me. Shall realize that my way of bringing the kingdom is the best way, and does not doubt, even for a time.

Note the method of Jesus in relieving John's doubts. (1) He did not condemn him for them. (2) He did not work any new or more striking miracle for them, only set out the same old truths in a new light, with new clearness. (3) The deeds which Jesus showed them were the proofs and credentials of Jesus' mission as the Messiah. (4) The proofs that Jesus was the Messiah showed John that his own life had not been a failure.

Jesus' Estimate of John. In verses 7-15 we read Jesus' estimate of John to the people around him, given after the departure of John's messengers. In substance he said, Why did you go out into the wilderness in such great crowds while John was still preaching there ? Was it to hear a popular preacher ? or a man talking in the hope of gain ? Or was it a prophet you hoped to hear ? Yea, it was indeed a prophet, and more than the prophets whose words your fathers listened to. For there has never been a prophet greater in character, in nearness to God, than this same John. No other was the immediate forerunner of the Messiah. Nevertheless, he that is the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John ; not in character, but in privilege. He belongs to a higher dispensation, with larger influences of the Spirit, and blessings beyond the comprehension of any in the previous dispensation.

II. THE INVITATION OF JESUS TO ALL MEN, Matt. 11 : 28-30. Come unto me, to where he was, to his person, to his heart, to his character, to his teaching and training, to his care, to his method of living, to his kingdom. It is only there that the blessing can be found. It is a personal invitation. It is just such an invitation that every Christian should give to the young, or to the unbeliever, — to go to Jesus and find rest and salvation. Personal invitations are usually far more effective than any other kind.

All ye that labor and are heavy laden. Heavy laden here means overstrained with too much load to be carried. "No one can mistake the almost violent force of such a figure who has ever noticed how the cruelty of people in Eastern countries leads them to pile on burdens to such an extent that their ill-favored animals can often be seen pitifully staggering under a weight quite unendurable." — C. S. Robinson, D.D.

"Jesus looks with clear-sighted compassion into the inmost history of all hearts and sees the toil and the sorrow which weigh on every soul. And no less remarkable is the divine consciousness of power to succor and to help, which speaks in them. . . .

"A great sculptor has composed a group where there diverge from the central figure, on either side, in two long lines, types of all the cruel varieties of human pains and pangs ; and in the midst stands, calm, pure, with the consciousness of power and love in His looks, and with outstretched hands as if beckoning an invitation and dropping a benediction, — Christ the Consoler." — Maclaren.

29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

16. But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17. And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

Take my yoke upon you. A yoke means three things. (1) It means obedience, submission to Christ; as the Romans sent their captives "under the yoke" in token of their submission.

(2) It is the means of service, by which we can do our work.

(3) It means service *together with another*. One never wears the yoke alone. Christ helps us to bear our burdens and to do our work. We are yoke-fellows with Jesus, co-laborers with the Master.

I will give you rest . . . ye shall find rest. There are two kinds of rest: the rest that is given, and the rest that is found. Jesus *gives* rest to the sorrowful, the over-burdened, the weary. Those who labor with Jesus will *find* rest in that labor, in the midst of the work.

The Rest that is Given. (1) That which has its source from without, from trust in the love of God. (2) It is rest from the burden of sin. (3) It is the rest of protection; God keeping us under the shadow of his wing. (4) It is rest in the promise that all things shall work together for good. (5) It is the rest of new strength and refreshment. (6) It is the rest of love, of the sympathy and friendship of Christ.

The Rest that is Found. (1) It is the rest that we reach through battle to victory, through labor to success, through cares and burdens and sorrows to the perfect peace of perfect trust. (2) It is the rest of free activity, of a perfectly healthy being who delights to do God's will as freely and gladly as a bird sings. (3) It is the rest of harmony with Christ and with our destiny and environment. (4) It is the rest of love, of the joy of pleasing our Leader and our Master.

Rest. "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in thee." — *Augustine*.

"The way of duty is the way of rest." — *Henry*.

"Christ's burden is light because he helps us to bear it. And when it becomes too heavy for us he puts himself under the load with us. The world thinks it is heavy and unbearable, — but not so, for one has a good comrade." — *Luther*.

"Rest is not quitting the busy career;

Rest is the fitting of self to one's sphere.

'Tis loving and serving the highest and best;

'Tis onward, unswerving, — and this is true rest."

— *Goethe*.

"O Rest of rest! O Peace, serene, eternal!

Thou ever livest, and Thou changest never;

And in the secret of Thy presence dwelleth

Fullness of joy forever and forever."

— *H. B. Stowe*.

III. JESUS REJECTED BY HIS GENERATION, Matt. 11: 16-27; 12: 1-47.

"Christ very seldom took notice of his enemies' slanders. 'When he was reviled he reviled not again.' If ever he did it was for the sake of those whom it harmed to distort his beauty. Thus here he speaks, without the slightest trace of irritation, of the capricious inconsistency of condemning himself and John on precisely opposite grounds."

It is uncertain whether these verses belong here, or to the beginning of the Perean ministry, some months later. But wherever actually spoken, they are extremely appropriate here where Matthew places them, — after Jesus had shown to the honest doubter, John the Baptist, the proof of his Messiahship, and strengthened his faith in him; and after a long period of loving labors, all accepted by the people for whom he worked. It is noticeable that in almost all cases "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12: 37). It was the rulers, the Pharisees and scribes, who opposed him. It may have been that these having expected as the Messiah a glorious King who should reestablish the mighty empire of David and Solomon, had counted upon being themselves the highest in the land when the empire was fully established. This Messiah was not one to whom they could look for glorious earthly honors; and they despised and hated him accordingly.

Jesus shows here his opinion of the dishonest doubters, who were unwilling to receive the truth no matter how much evidence was given them. They were bound to

18. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

find fault with whatever way the New Kingdom was presented to them. They did not wish any reformation, and however it came they would find some reason to reject it. **John came neither eating nor drinking** like other people ; he was very ascetic. His preaching was powerful because of this ; it drew great crowds. But the rulers were not pleased. They wanted him to be more lax, to give up the extremes of his teaching ; to follow their lead in the mode of religious thought. And they said **He hath a devil**, for no one in his right mind would live in such a way as John !

Then came Jesus, the Son of man, living like the others around him, sharing the customary food and drink of the people. " He came as the Son of man, and therefore he came to show that the common life of all men could be lived with perfect holiness, and that seclusion and asceticism were not necessary as universal conditions." And they say, **Behold a man gluttonous**, etc. This was not true, it was their misrepresentation.

Jesus came to the comforting conclusion that **wisdom is justified of her children**, is approved, accepted, by her children, even though all the children of the evil one reject her.

Illustration. Jesus illustrated the attitude of these rulers by a familiar picture. In the marketplace, the public square just within the gate of the city, where business was transacted, markets opened, loafers would lounge, and boys and girls gather to play. Jesus pictured here a group of little children playing at make-believe marriages and funerals. First they acted a marriage procession ; some of them piping on instruments of music, while the rest were expected to leap and dance. In a perverse mood, however, these refused to respond, but stood still and looked discontented.

So the little pipers changed their game, and proposed a funeral. They began to imitate the loud wailing of the Eastern mourners ; the piercing shrieks, and loud, high, prolonged, quavering shrieks, which were the method used by the hired mourners of the time. But again they were thwarted, for their companions refused to chime in with the mournful cry, and to beat their breasts.

And now, they say, What do you want ? We have tried both kinds, and you are dissatisfied ; you are bound to find fault, whatever we choose.

Jesus therefore warns these rulers of the Jews that the most wicked cities of the Old Testament times and the Gentile cities around them whose inhabitants they themselves despised would suffer less punishment than the cities which had seen the works of Jesus Christ, and had with scorn rejected him. For had those cities seen the mighty works which Jesus had done in the presence of these to whom he was speaking, they would have repented. All were to be punished for their sins and their refusal to repent, and their rejection of salvation. But when the judgment is made as to their guilt, those who sinned against greater light and greater opportunities would have the greater guilt and suffer the severer punishment. Resistance to light and privilege harden the heart and sear the conscience.

Here is a mystery. If these cities would have repented under better influences, why were they not bestowed upon them ? Who can tell ? Yet we see in individuals and in nations the same mysterious fact. Therefore **Jesus answered** the unspoken thoughts of the people about them. He gave the only two answers which were possible under the circumstances. (1) We must trust the goodness and love of God as to things we cannot understand. **I thank thee, O Father**, therefore loving and good, **Lord of heaven and earth**, and therefore able to do all that love and goodness deem wise, and with a right to act according to his sovereign will. **Because thou hast hid these things**, these mysteries, **from the wise**, because the solution is an act of faith and love, not of intellect, **and hast revealed them unto babes**, those who have the child-like spirit, willing to learn and to trust.

26. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

12: 14. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

(2) There is some wise reason for all these mysteries. It was not for want of goodness or power that things were not done differently. You need not fear that God has lost control of the world. For even to me, whose love you can see, God has delivered all things. But no one can know the Father save the Son, and those to whom the Son will, "willeth to," reveal him.

In Matthew 12 several malicious attacks upon Jesus by his enemies are grouped together, although they took place at various times and places during about a year.

The First Attack (vs. 1-13) was through Christ's method of keeping the Sabbath. The Pharisaic law was very particular about the keeping of the Sabbath, laying on the people a yoke very difficult to bear. They measured him by a false standard, for these rules which they accused him of breaking were not given by Moses, nor contained in the law of God. They were growths upon the law through the years; they were like fungi, not like the fruitbearing branches.

Christ defended himself calmly by citing two examples from the Scriptures, which they believed to the letter, and whose Sabbath laws they thought they were fulfilling; and the examples were of persons whom they revered as peculiarly holy. Their devotion to the Sabbath was right, but their method of applying the law was false in the extreme. The Sabbath was made for man, for his higher nature, for his religious growth, for his fitting for the heavenly home; not man for the Sabbath. To keep a formal set of rules, without regard to either their physical or their spiritual value.

The Second Attack (vs. 14-21) was an actual attempt at his destruction, his assassination. But Jesus withdrew quietly from the place of danger.

The Third Attack (vs. 22-37) was the especially malicious one of ascribing his wonderful deeds to the evil one, to the chief of evil spirits, instead of to God alone. They could not deny the facts, they tried, therefore, to explain them away. But Jesus here defends himself by a well-known fact that "a nation or kingdom may embrace within itself infinite parties, divisions, discords, jealousies, and heart-burnings; yet, if it is to subsist as a nation at all, it must not, *as regards other nations*, have lost its sense of unity. When it does so, of necessity it falls to pieces and perishes." — *Trench*. The kingdom of heaven, with all its virtues and blessings for man, with Christ at its head, was arrayed against the kingdom of evil, with Satan at its head. Everything that Christ did was destructive of what Beelzebub did. The prince of demons might order some demon out of a man for the sake of deceiving some one, but he could not systematically oppose his own principles, and try to make men healthy and holy and happy, as Jesus did.

He that is not with me is against me. This is a general principle applied to the rulers and the people. I stand for the kingdom of God. If you oppose me and my teachings you show that you do not belong to that kingdom, but the kingdom of evil. You must be in one or the other. **Wherefore I say unto you**, because you are perilously near to blasphemy and the unpardonable sin, the one sin which can, from its inherent nature, never receive forgiveness. It means a hardening of the heart against every possible influence that can change it. It is the deliberate and conscious rejection of good and choice of evil. This sin cannot be forgiven, not because God is not willing to forgive, but because one who thus sins against the Holy Spirit has put himself where no power can soften his heart or change his nature. A man may misuse his eyes and yet see; but whosoever puts them out can never see again. It is possible for us to sin and be forgiven: recovery through God's Spirit is not impossible. But if we so harden our hearts that they cannot feel the power of the Spirit, if we are past feeling, there is no hope.

But Note. In former times, more than in our day, many with tender consciences were greatly troubled lest they had committed the unpardonable sin. But Jesus himself has said, over and over again, that all who desire forgiveness, all who have any feeling of tenderness, all who are weary of sin, can have abundant forgiveness. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Whoever feels sorry for his

sin cannot have committed the unpardonable sin, for all who repent shall be forgiven. He who has committed the unpardonable sin cares not, feels not, does not desire forgiveness.

The Fourth Attack (vs. 38-45) was a demand for a sign. There was no lack of signs, of testimony that Jesus was what he claimed to be. But they wanted some sign of their own choosing, like the manna by Moses, or fire from heaven by Elijah. "Their language was respectful, but their design bad" (Luke 11 : 16). They refused to believe Jesus unless he would put himself into their hands.

The Fifth Attack (vs. 46-48) was the opposition from his own nearest friends, who had been persuaded that he was going out of his mind (Mark 3 : 21). It often happens that the hardest opposition in the career of a reformer is the opposition of his own family ; not in hatred or anger, but in misguided love.

IV. CHOOSING JESUS AS OUR TEACHER, Matt. 12 : 46-50. These verses do not mean that Jesus did not love his mother, or his brethren. There is nothing contemptuous in his reply, not any hint that Jesus ignored earthly relationships. We know that he loved his mother by his care for her when dying on the cross. But the answer was twofold.

First, he taught them that his earthly relations had no control over his divine work. It was impossible for them then to understand him, or to judge correctly as to his duty. So he says to his disciples that when the conflict comes between earthly relationships and loyalty to himself, the loyalty must come first (Luke 14 : 26).

Second, he used these earthly relationships as an illustration and an invitation. For he declares that those who choose him as their Teacher, who are his disciples, learners, pupils, belong to Christ's family, have the closest of relationship with him ; possess the same family characteristics.

If we thus choose to belong to Christ's family how much more is involved ! By it we become children and heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. We can inherit from our good parents three things : (1) a nature, tendencies toward good, possibilities of great usefulness and happiness. (2) We may inherit possessions, wealth, rank, home. (3) We inherit the love and care and training of a good home. All these in an infinite degree we inherit from our Father in heaven if we are the brothers and sisters of Christ ; a pure and holy nature, capable of infinite blessedness ; all the wealth of heaven as our home, so perfect, so beautiful, so rich in every good ; 'and the personal care and love of God himself.

In view of the invitation of Jesus to come to him, to turn from all sin, and selfishness of every kind, and to live as Jesus gave the example, it is especially wise for every young person to go to school to Jesus. First of all, give yourselves to Jesus as your Saviour, your Helper, your Teacher. A disciple of Jesus is a scholar for life, growing wiser, stronger and holier as long as he lives. But most of all keep close to Jesus. "The beloved Dr. J. R. Miller used to say for many years as his statement of his personal religion, 'Jesus and I are friends.'"

"Jesus is still calling men and women to associate with him in his work. He wants persons of character, teachableness, loyalty, and who give promise of usefulness. No higher honor can come to any person than such an invitation from the Master. He does not promise great worldly honors and financial rewards, but he gives them precious opportunities for unselfish service. . . . The more of these he can have, the sooner he will establish his kingdom in all-parts of the world. Let us give him our heartiest and most efficient service." — *The Otterbein Teacher*. It is a great delight to work with Jesus as His friend, for His cause, with other Christians the world over ; praying that the Lord's prayer may be fulfilled, that God's kingdom may come, soon, on earth as it is in heaven.

V. THE RESPONSE OF MEN TO THE MINISTRY OF JESUS. Jesus ministers to the world to-day for the most part through his followers ; through their preaching and their living ; through their words and their actions. Some one has said, "The Christian is the world's Bible." And it is so in great measure. We are the mirror in which the world sees the image of Christ. "A Japanese went to a noted minister in Boston and said, 'Sir, can you tell me where to find the beautiful life ?' Upon inquiry the minister found that he had been living in a boarding house in San Francisco, with a man whose life had been so unselfish, sunny and helpful that the Japanese had called it the 'beautiful life.' " — *Record of Christian Work*.

Never before were men responding so earnestly and quickly to the call of Jesus. The Christianity of the trenches may not be like our historical Christianity of the churches. But it is there ; God is speaking to the men, and they are listening. It

is impossible to quote here from the multitude of reports from the chaplains of our regiments, from our Y. M. C. A. workers, and from those who have visited the men when resting behind the lines; but they all agree that there seems to be a great spiritual awakening, which will have its effect not only on the after lives of those fighting men, but will regenerate the lands to which they will return.

LESSON X. — December 5.

THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM. — Matt. 13: 1-43.

PRINT Matt. 13: 24-33.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Fret not thyself because of evil-doers.* — PSA. 37: 1.

Devotional Reading: Isa. 60: 1-3, 10-14, 19-22.

Additional Material for Teachers: Gal. 6: 6-10.

Primary Topic: JESUS' STORY ABOUT GOOD SEEDS AND BAD SEEDS.

Lesson Material: Matt. 13: 24-30.

Memory Verse: Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. 6: 7.

Junior Topic: THE STORY OF THE WHEAT AND TARES.

Lesson Material: Matt. 13: 24-30, 36-43.

Memory Verse: Matt. 13: 38.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: WHEAT OR TARES?

Topic for Young People and Adults: HOW THE KINGDOM OF GOD GROWS.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

"Keep yourself in the background and draw out from the members of your class their own ideas." — *Mr. Sidney A. Weston, Ph.D.*

The Primary grade studies to-day the story of the good seed and the tares, saving the remainder of the lesson for their study next week. The teacher can approach this lesson from the illustration of the child's garden, — we get from that garden just the fruit which comes from the seeds we allow to grow there. We cannot plant corn, sweet peas, and thistle seeds, and expect to reap a full harvest of corn from them all. So we must be careful not to sow seeds of bad thoughts in our heart gardens, and if we at any time find that they have been sown we must root them up immediately.

The Juniors will study the lesson in a very similar way, but the applications can be broader, and fuller.

The Intermediates and Seniors can make it a very practical lesson on their influence in the world, as well as their influencing by the world. Are they being wheat or tares in God's kingdom? What are the essential characteristics of each, and how can spiritual tares become spiritual wheat?

In the classes for Young People and Adults it will be an interesting study to

note the increase of the Christian Church from its first beginning. The small beginning, the relatively small increase at first, the increasingly rapid growth; and the reasons therefor.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time. — The parables in this chapter were spoken immediately after the incidents recorded in Matt. 12: 22-50, in the autumn of A.D. 28.

Place. — Beside the Sea of Galilee, probably near Capernaum.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

Why did Jesus now begin to teach in parables?

The bearing of each parable on the Kingdom of God. What is the Kingdom of God as learned from the teaching of Jesus?

The physical and historical application of the parables. Why must wheat and tares be mingled in this world? Are we wheat or tares? Can tares become wheat?

The reward of the righteous: when and what?

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

The *Commentaries* on Matthew, and on the parallels in Mark and Luke.

Standard Works on the Parables, by Trench, Arnot, Taylor, Bruce. *The Parables by the Lake*, by Prof. W. H. Thomson, M.D., LL.D., who was born

in Syria ; also his *Parables and Their Home. Parables of the Kingdom*, by Dr. G. Campbell Morgan. *The Parables of Jesus*, by Arbp. Cosmo Gordon Lang. *Parables of the Lake*, by J. R. Macduff, primarily for children, but full of instruction for adults as well. Hubbard's *A Study of Parables*.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : Parables of the Kingdom of God.

- I. THE NEW METHOD OF TEACHING, vs. 13-15, 34, 35.
- II. OBSTACLES TO THE KINGDOM, vs. 1-30, 36-43.
 1. Parable of the Sower : Four Kinds of Soil, vs. 1-23.
 2. Parable of the Tares : Mingled Seed, vs. 24-30, 36-43.

III. GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM, vs. 31-33.

1. Parable of the Mustard Seed : Small Beginnings, vs. 31, 32.
2. Parable of the Leaven : Personal Contact, v. 33.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Richard W. Gilder's *Poems*, "The Sower." The *Poem* beginning "Ten thousand sowers through the land." Hood's "Lady's Dream" shows how tares may be sown unconsciously. Mrs. Gatty's *Parables from Nature*. Gott-hold's *Emblems*. Lowell's *Poems*, "The Sower." P. P. Bliss's *Hymn*, "What shall the harvest be?" "Bringing in the sheaves," by Knowles Shaw. "Sow in the morn thy seed," by Montgomery.

I. THE NEW METHOD OF TEACHING, vs. 13-15, 34, 35. We now begin a new epoch in the teaching of Christ, growing out of the bitter opposition to his work, the perverse misunderstanding of his teaching, and the dulness of response to the truths he taught. The opposition, as usual, brings out new truths and new methods which have been a power all through the ages, just as the opposition of the small film in the electric bulb, by obstructing the flow of electricity, produces the brilliant light.

What is a Parable? It is a story picture of familiar things which illustrates, illumines, and impresses some great truth. "A brief narrative founded on real scenes or events such as occur in nature and human life, and usually with a moral or religious application." — *Standard Dict.* "Invariably in the teaching of Jesus a parable was a picture of things seen, intended to reveal and explain things unseen." — *G. Campbell Morgan*. "The little girl was very near the mark when she said that a parable is 'an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.'"

Consider how large a part of our words expressing spiritual things are metaphors, — word parables derived from physical things : as heaven, spirit, heart, courage, vision, angel.

The Disciples "had reached that period in their education by Jesus when many questions and difficulties would arise concerning his kingdom." Parables presented the truth about the Kingdom of God, but in such a way that those who wished to know the truth could see it more and more clearly, in forms that would gradually unfold under larger experience ; while the stories could not be used to his destruction. No one could object to a simple story. Besides, these stories would be remembered, inevitably, by the dullest ; they would be pondered over, and some time, months afterward, perhaps, their true meaning and purpose would flash upon their minds, and they would "be converted."

For God wanted them to be his disciples. He did not speak in parables *in order that* he might not be understood, *lest* they should be converted and healed. Verses 13-15 "express what he felt was and must be for many the final outcome of his mission. It was the actual course of things, a course inevitable under the government of God."

The parables would be understood by those whose hearts were made ready for them. In them truths are put in "so simple a form that a child may understand them, yet so deep in meaning that Christian thought for nearly two thousand years has pondered over them without exhausting their treasure." — *Archbishop Lang*.

II. THE OBSTACLES TO THE KINGDOM, vs. 1-30, 36-43. In this chapter of Matthew we have grouped together eight parables, probably all spoken at one time, as Matthew records them. The first of these parables have been divided into pairs, each taking up a different aspect of the subject. The first pair, The Obstacles to the Kingdom. Second pair, the Growth of the Kingdom. Third pair, the Unsearchable Riches of the Kingdom. The seventh Parable, the Consummation of the Kingdom. We study the first two pairs to-day, and the others for our next lesson.

The Scene. Great multitudes had gathered on the seashore near Capernaum, eager to hear Jesus preach the glad tidings of the Kingdom of Heaven. They crowded around him so closely that he could not be easily seen by the greater part of the crowd. So he entered one of the fishing boats anchored near the shore; probably one owned by one of his fisherman disciples. Here he sat at the prow, the highest part of the boat. The people stood on the shore, which being curved and sloping, formed a sort of natural amphitheatre, where Jesus was in the centre. And in the clear air of that region every word could be heard by the vast multitude.

Note that this was not the first time that Jesus used a boat for a pulpit, from which he could more conveniently reach the people. (See Luke 5:3 and Mark 3:9.)

1. PARABLE OF THE SOWER: FOUR KINDS OF SOIL, vs. 1-23. In this parable the Seed is the Word of God, good seed, the life, character and teaching of Jesus. *The Sower* is the Son of God himself.

The emphasis in this parable is on the reception of good seed. For a good harvest it is absolutely necessary to have three things: the best seed, the best soil, and the best care. "God has done his part. Therefore the kind of harvest depends on our reception and care of the good seed." — *Professor Thomson*.

The Soil is the soul of man, including heart, conscience, mind, memory, his whole nature. The person largely determines the kind of soil he will be. "The trampled ground can become soft, the rocky places deep, and the thorns be rooted out." Therefore no one can excuse himself for being bad soil for the good seed. He can go to God for a new heart, and can be changed into fruitful soil. "In one point the illustration is imperfect. The soil is passive; man is action." And yet we all know that the common soil of our fields can be changed and improved so as to bear much more fruit.

There are Four Kinds of Soil represented in the Parable. 1. *The Soil by the Wayside*, — the hard trodden path through the Eastern grain field. "The grain fields in Palestine are rarely fenced, though the landmarks are definite and plain. There are little paths leading through hither and thither, some being the highways along which the horsemen ride and asses carry their burdens. It was along such a way as this — a foot or so in width — that the seed fell which the birds of the air immediately devoured." — *Prof. I. H. Hall*.

This trodden path represents the heart so tramped over by a thousand cares and pleasures and worldly interests that the good seed cannot sink into it. Intense interest in any one thing will drown out all the sounds of other things around us. We have often seen it ourselves.

The Birds represent the various means used by the Evil One for his purposes: evil thoughts, selfish interests, doubts, criticism of the manner of preacher or teacher, thoughts of pleasure or of work. A dying man once said to the minister by his side, "I have not heard a sermon for thirty years!" The minister was surprised, for the man had been a regular attendant at church services. "It is true," continued the man, "when the sermon began I always settled myself and arranged my business plans for the next week." The birds had immediately devoured the good seed; it had never any chance to grow and produce fruit.

2. *The Stony Soil*, better as in Revisions, "rocky" soil; not land strewn with stones, but flat stretches of rock thinly covered with an inch or so of soil. Seed on such soil sprang up sooner than the rest, because the dry, underlying rock drew and retained the heat of the sun, and made it, for a time, like a forcing house or hotbed. But the sun soon dried up the hot surface soil, which could draw up no moisture from the deep earth, and the roots had no depth of soil into which to run and drink in the moisture.

This rocky land represents those shallow natures who in any new thing see only its favorable aspects, and sanguinely follow, expecting nothing else. Then when any trouble comes, making it hard to follow the Master, it tests them, and they stumble, and because they have no root they wither away.

Their emotions are stirred, but the word does not reach their moral nature, and their will and character are unchanged. They are moved by the winds of popular excitement or enthusiasm, but there is no new life. "Their fault is not the mere fact of receiving the word with joy. For joy is a characteristic of deep as well as of shallow natures. Absence of joys in a religious life is a sign, not of depth, but of dullness. Joy without thought is a definition of the stony-ground hearer." — *Prof. A. B. Bruce*.

3. *The Thorny Soil*, — that in which the seeds of thorns and briars lay dormant, ready to grow with the first warm days of spring, and much stronger in their growth

24. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

than the wheat, so that in the growth they choke the wheat, take up all the virtue of the soil and shade them from the sunshine, so little of the wheat can come to maturity, and few of the grains fill out.

This represents those so absorbed in other things than the kingdom of God that their hearts and their time are full, and there is nothing left for God. They are absorbed in the cares of this world; and in the undue longing and striving after riches; and even in pleasures which are right in themselves, yet because they occupy too much attention choke the Word, so that it becometh unfruitful.

Our religious life may be injured by the excess of things which are right in themselves. It is not "this world," but "the care of this world," not "riches" but the "deceitfulness of riches," that choke the Word. The demands of society, of business, of pleasure, of household cares, may absorb so much of our time and interest that there is neither time nor strength for religious duties, family and secret prayer, the study of God's word, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, helping the poor. The wheat and thorns are having a great struggle in many of our lives.

4. *The Good Ground.* The first three obstacles in the way have taught us what things are adverse to the Kingdom, and how earnestly we should strive to overcome them.

"Now a beauteous sight bursts into view, — a field of ripe grain on a sunny harvest day." No disciple will be contented with a thirtyfold, or a sixtyfold, or even with a hundredfold of fruit.

Note two things in closing this study. (1) The four kinds of ground were not necessarily different. The soil was the same; it was only the influences around them, and the amount of their yielding to those influences which altered the conditions. And in the soil of human life the influences can be removed, or overcome.

(2) There were different grades even in the good ground. Not all are capable of as much visible fruit-bearing as are some. Yet they are all classed together, provided they have done their best.

2. **PARABLE OF THE TARES: MINGLED SEED, vs. 24-30, 36-43.** Here the good seed represents the children of the Kingdom. God's children are good seed, not grains of sand; for they are living, they are the means of increasing the disciples; through them the whole world is to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit and other children of the Kingdom. There will be every kind of goodness, of fine character, of ability in useful ways, of true progress. The seed was sowed as before by the Son of man, whom our heavenly Father sent into the world. He is the source of all good seed. He began in the Garden of Eden and has been sowing ever since.

The Field is the World, the whole world. It all belongs to Jesus, as he himself said (v. 38). We must not "miss the lesson that He claims the whole world as His, and contemplates the sowing of the seed broadcast over it all. The Kingdom of Heaven is to be developed on, and to spread through, the whole earth. The world belongs to Christ not only when it is filled with the Kingdom, but before the sowing. . . . Men become children of the kingdom by taking the Gospel into their hearts, and thereby receiving a new principle of growth which in truth becomes themselves." — *Maclaren*.

The Enemy Sowing Tares, vs. 25, 26. **While men slept.** This does not mean while the Sower slept, for "he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep"; nor while the church is asleep, for Satan is often most busy when the church is awake and in earnest. What it means is that the sowing was done in secret, as unobserved as would be the movements of a human sower while those around him were asleep after the work of the day.

The Tares of our version is "darnel," a common corn-field weed in southern Europe and all the Mediterranean countries. It is an annual, and in the earlier

28. He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29. But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

stages of its growth can scarcely be discriminated from wheat; but the moment the ear is developed the difference is unmistakable. Still worse, the seeds of darnel are poisonous, and should the seeds become mixed with the grains of wheat in the winnowing, serious consequences might result, as they have been known to produce death, not only in man but among animals and birds.

The tares represent **the children of the wicked one**, those filled with his spirit, living according to his principles, and under his control. They are not a degenerate form of virtue, but as distinct as virtue and vice. They often resemble the good till the fruit begins to appear, but they are as different as wheat and tares, as thistles and roses.

Note that there is a great variety of good seed, adapted to all seasons and to all circumstances, producing different kinds of fruit at different times. One fault of the Church of the Middle Ages was that they considered only one sort of seed to be good, no matter what the fruit it bore. But the seed must be good of its kind, if it is to increase the amount of goodness in the world. Imperfect Christians tend to multiply imperfect Christians. Every error and fault of ours is doubly evil; it injures ourselves and it injures others.

The Transformation of the Tares into Wheat. In the moral world it is entirely possible to convert the evil, poisonous tares into wholesome useful wheat. That is one reason why the two are growing together in the world. The evil one is ever tempting the good to join the sinful and selfish; their bad example is a constant hindrance to the development of the world.

On the other hand the children of God are ever trying to make the world better in every way; that is their business in the service of Jesus, to come into such contact with the worldly and selfish as to change them into Christians.

There was great wisdom in the decision of the householder to let **both grow together until the harvest**. The two in the beginning of their growth looked so much alike that the servants were not wise enough to invariably distinguish between them; they might **root up also the wheat with them**. This was often the case in the Middle Ages, when often the best of the children of God were considered to be children of the evil one.

The good grows by overcoming the evil. The war against wrong makes mighty men. It increases courage, patience, loyalty, endurance, love of the good and hatred of the evil. In Revelation 2 and 3 all the great spiritual blessings are given to "him that overcometh." The evil has come, and is near us and all around us, in order that we may overcome, and have part in the kingdom of God.

The Harvest Time. **The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels** (v. 39). See also Matt. 16:27; 24:31; 2 Thes. 1:7. **Gather ye together first the tares . . . to burn them.** The tares were gathered out as far as possible in stalks bearing their heads of seed. But in addition to this, since flour "of mixed wheat and tares cannot be given even to animals, all the baskets of wheat are carried from the threshing-floor to the flat roofs of their houses, where they are emptied out on mats, and the tedious separation of grain from grain is carried on, sometimes for days, until the wheat is finally rid of this unhappy admixture." — *Thomson*. Then the tares are burned, as they are worse than good for nothing.

So all that offend, that cause others to sin, and that do iniquity themselves, shall be cast into a furnace of fire, where **there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth**. This is all they are fit for. No other end is possible. Evil must be destroyed, in order to keep it from spreading in the world, and destroying the children of God.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. For all evil shall be destroyed; the righteous shall overcome gradually every kind of the works of the flesh, through the manifold grace of God.

31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field :

32. Which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Sowing and Reaping, Gal. 6 : 6-10. "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This present life is a time of sowing, and he is a fool that does not look forward to the harvest, and see to it that he sows the kind of seed that will bring the harvest which he desires. You cannot successfully defy God's laws of the seed and the harvest. These verses do not mean that we are to give up the world and retire to a hermitage. "But it does mean that all our lower desires are to be regulated, subordinated, and controlled by the higher life of the Spirit." — *Gibson*.

"Shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." "He who admits a holy suggestion into his mind will find that ever more in the pauses of life, even in its bustle and business, things allied to it will steal into the current of his consciousness." — *Taylor*. "When we meet our small duties, sacrifices, small burdens, and crosses, faithfully and nobly, we have our reward on a grander scale than we expected. Burdens grow to wings, crosses to crowns, faithful endurance to triumph ; and from each discharge of duty we acquire the power to meet the next with efficiency. Our small victories in the face of temptation are won over obstacles and spiritual enemies and are won to the shaping of our characters." — *Thomson*, *Nature the Mirror of Grace*.

As the French lady said to the great ecclesiastic, — "My Lord Cardinal, God does not pay at the end of every week, but at last he pays !"

III. GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM, vs. 31-33. **I. PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED : SMALL BEGINNINGS**, vs. 31, 32. This seed also was living seed, sown by a man in his field. It was therefore seed that could produce a harvest. It was the

least of all seeds, that is, the smallest of the seeds that the people daily used, and the smallest in contrast with the plant that grows from it. **Greatest among herbs . . . a tree.** Not a real tree, but so great an herb as to seem a tree, with branches large enough for the birds of the air to lodge in them. "In the proper season the traveller on Gennesaret may ride by mustard bushes as high as his horse, and alive with flocks of merry bullfinches or of rockpigeons feeding on the seeds." — *Professor Thomson*. The same is true of places in California.

The Teaching of This Parable. It is easy to see how doubts might have arisen in the minds of many of his disciples from time to time. He was a teacher in the humbler ranks of life, with a few unlearned, unarmed disciples, without wealth, without armies, without a throne. Yet he had come to bring in the Kingdom of Heaven ; and opposed to him was the whole Roman Empire, all the

evils and degradations of the times ; all the opposition of the rulers and important men of the Jews ; all the selfishness of the human heart.

The parable prophesied the growth and success in God's field of the world of the kingdom he had planted. However small its beginning it was to become the largest of the kingdoms of the world. "Whatever be the thoughts of men about Jesus, none can deny that his forecast in this parable has been quite fulfilled, in that his



The Sower.

Millet.

33. Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

kingdom in its external development has become the greatest growth of history." — *Professor Thomson.*

The marvellous progress of missions is showing the greatness of the growth. A recent quotation from a Japanese of rank says that Christianity is making immense strides in that land; it is overcoming all obstacles, it is growing into a large tree. And it is doing this without making any bitter feelings, without antagonizing any. It is simply the steady growth of the small mustard seed planted there years ago by the missionaries, and watered and cared for by their successors.

An instance is told of "a well-educated young soldier in Japan" who "brought a piece of thorny brier to a missionary and said: 'I once saw a picture of a head crowned with thorns like this, and I can never forget it. Whenever I have things to bear in the barracks, the thought of that picture helps me. Can you tell me about it, and has it anything to do with your religion?'"



Crown of Thorns.

"When the precious old story of the Cross was told him, he accepted its truths at once, and immediately went out to tell the story to others."

America's Opportunity. This is called a Christian land; and with all the evils and failures to meet the tests which come upon the people who profess the name of Christ, it is still mainly dominated by the spirit of the Master. The cause of Christ in our land and in other lands, the care for the poor and sinful, has always appealed to our people and called forth millions of dollars for relief, and tons of sympathy shown in practical ways.

Never before have there been such opportunities to aid Christ's cause. American Christians are doing more than ever before in the mission fields, even during the War; while vastly larger sums have been given to the sufferers from war and famine than we have ever dreamed of doing. Millions of women are working for the Red Cross, giving both money and time. More has been given for good work apart from the war needs, inspired and stirred up by the spirit of helpfulness so greatly aroused by these sudden needs.

But the greatest opportunity of the United States came at the time of the final settlement of peace between the warring nations. The United States did not want more land, or care for an indemnity merely for the sake of retribution. Her previous history confirms this. We gave Spain twenty million dollars for the Philippines, and have ever since been pouring out money for their schools, and their training in self-government, and the civilized life. Our country gave back to China the six million dollars indemnity paid at the time of the Boxer War. No other nation did so. We showed the world that we warred not for honor or for material gain, but for an ideal, for a Christian ideal, and for the good of the whole world.

And the missionaries will receive the honor due them, for they have been statesmen, accomplishing much for the countries to which they had been sent, as well as for the kingdom of God of whom they were the teachers.

"In the strength of my Christian faith I feel a great, glad confidence in the final outcome. 'The Lord reigneth—let the earth rejoice.' The whole venture of earthly life lies secure in the will and purpose of him whom we serve. He may be trusted to overturn and overturn until that mode of life whose right it is to reign shall be at last enthroned. If we live and believe and obey the highest we know, we shall see descending out of the realm of vision into the realm of accomplished fact a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." — *Charles R. Brown, D.D.*

2. PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN: PERSONAL CONTACT, v. 33. Note several things in this parable. (1) The leaven that does the work is a living organism. It is only

living Christianity that spreads true Christianity. (2) Leaven works secretly and silently. It makes no noise. So it is in largest measure the quiet, silent life of Christians that will transform the world. It will not be so much by preaching as by living. (3) The leaven works by personal contact with the particles to be leavened, and spreads through the entire mass by the same means. There is no "absent treatment" possible. A box of leaven on a shelf never leavens the meal. It is personal work, personal soul in touch with other souls. "Each true Christian, leavened by Christianity, operates as leaven upon his neighbor." (4) The quality of the leaven will in great measure determine the quality of the bread when it is leavened. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the leaven should be pure, that the Christian character should be as perfect as possible in doctrine and in life.

"A Christian man can do good only by going among people. This Jesus did — he was called a friend of publicans and sinners. He ate with them, and mingled with them in social ways, and his pure, loving, gentle life left its impression on their lives.

"We need to take the lesson. Let your goodness be felt. Let your kindness be felt. Let your kindness touch others. Let your example have in it a contagion of joy, of peace, of unselfishness, of sweetness, of purity, which shall be a benediction everywhere. Be sure that you make one little spot of the world better, cleaner, whiter, brighter, gladder, because you live in it." — *Dr. J. R. Miller, in Devotional Hours with the Bible.*

LESSON XI. — December 12.

WHAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE. — Matt. 13: 44-58.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.* — ROM. 14:17.

Devotional Reading: Isa. 62:6-12.

Additional Material for Teachers: Mark 4:26-32; Luke 13:18-21.

Primary Topic: SOWING IN GOOD GROUND.

Lesson Material: Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23.

Memory Verse: Others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Matt. 13:8.

Junior Topic: SHORT STORIES THAT JESUS TOLD.

Lesson Material: Matt. 13:31-33, 44-46.

Memory Verses: Matt. 13:45, 46.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: THE JOY OF FINDING THE KINGDOM.

Topic for Young People and Adults: THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THE KINGDOM.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

An eastern king showed his treasure chest to the ambassador of the king of Spain, after the discovery of the mines in America. The ambassador put his hand to the bottom of the king's chest and said: "I can reach the bottom of your treasures, but there is no bottom, no end to the treasures of my Master." This is a story which has its applications to the two kinds of treasure — that of the world and that of the kingdom of God.

The **Primary** classes study to-day the parable of the Sower, — good seed, but sown on various sorts of ground. Show the special characteristics of these various sorts of ground, and make the application

to the children. The lesson is, Don't be bad ground. (See Notes on Lesson X.)

The other grades study the remaining parables of Matthew 13, which all illustrate the value of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the **Junior** classes the greater part of the time will be spent in familiarizing them with the stories as Jesus told them; but a wise teacher can bring out the lesson of the value of belonging to God. The **Older Grades** can conduct a Bible hunt which will impress upon them the essential joyfulness of the Christian religion, the fact that they lose no real pleasure in joining the Church, but lay up for themselves stores of joy for all time, and for eternity. "Long-faced Christianity" is not true Christianity.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Immediately after the last lesson. These parables were spoken to the disciples alone after their return from the seashore, and Jesus' explanation of the previous parables.

THE ROUND TABLE.**FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.**

Taking each parable separately, —
 The Orientalism of each parable.
 The teachings of each parable.
 Each parable in modern life.
 Hidden treasures in nature.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Books on Matthew and the Parables named in our last lesson.

Dr. Wolcott Calkins' *Parables for Our*

Time. Thomson's *Nature the Mirror of Grace.*

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

W. Forbes Mitchell's *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*, p. 152, on hidden treasures. Whittier's *Poems*, "The Vaudois Teacher." Jane Taylor's "The Philosopher's Scales."

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT : The Unsearchable Riches of the Kingdom.

- I. THE JOY OF FINDING THE KINGDOM, vs. 44-46.
- II. THE CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM, vs. 47-52.
- III. THE REJECTION OF THE KING, vs. 53-58.

44. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

46. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

I. THE JOY OF FINDING THE KINGDOM, vs. 44-46. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hid in a field. To fully understand the allusions in this parable we must put ourselves in the place of the Orientals of Palestine and adjacent countries, especially in early times. Without a stable government, without banks and safe places of deposit, and where the country is often overrun by marauders and robbers and massacres are frequent, — the hiding of treasure was common, and necessary. No one could trust his neighbor to hold his treasures or to use them in business, and the rulers were rapacious to obtain the wealth of their subjects. In the unsettled state of the country the owners often failed to return, and the secret of the treasure was lost.

The story of Captain Kidd is familiar to all. Doubtless there are a good many hidden treasures in the lands where the Great World War has been raging, and some of it will never be found by its former owners.

An Example. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis writes: "Lecturing in Kentucky recently I saw a cave of diamonds, newly discovered. One day a farmer ploughing thought the ground sounded hollow. Going to the barn he brought a spade and opened up the aperture. Flinging down a rope his friends let the explorer down, and when the torches were lighted, lo! a cave of amethysts and sapphires and diamonds. For generations the cave had been undiscovered and the jewels unknown." Here the treasure had been hidden by the hand of God, working through the powers of nature.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls . . . found one pearl of great price. "A pearl of the first quality is unquestionably the most beautiful object in nature." "The old writers speak of it as altogether wonderful, and to be honored above all jewels that the eyes of man have beheld."

The Unsearchable Riches of the Kingdom. These two parables present the same great truth under different aspects. In one it was like hidden treasure. Its value is not recognized by many. They are in the midst of it, it is on every hand, as the electricity lay all around us, unknown, until the discoverers and inventors learned of its value and use. All the inventions of modern civilization, countless treasures, were hidden from almost everyone a century ago.

"We do not know what hidden treasures of spiritual good there are all the while so close to us. Sometimes we come suddenly upon them, and then we should instantly seize them and appropriate them, whatever it may cost us. We should be ready to give up all we have to gain the spiritual riches that we find." They are the treasures of character, usefulness, happiness and peace; treasures of eternal life, growing more and more in every good quality of the soul till we become "angels excelling in strength," with all the glories, external and internal, that are portrayed in the description of heaven.

The other kind of treasure is like the pearl, of which it is said: "Of all the objects employed as ornaments, the pearl is almost the only one which derives nothing from art." We cannot increase the love of God, or the gift of his Son, or the truths of the Gospel, or the blessedness of heaven. But we can learn more of their value, we can see them more clearly, as we can a landscape when the mists are blown away.

There Are Two Ways of Seeking. To some the treasure comes amid the daily work and experiences of life. Trouble comes, forgiveness is needed, the heart is hungry, the knowledge comes of what others have received, revivals, a chance word, may lead to the search for the hidden treasure.

The other way of seeking is of those who like the Wise Men of old saw the Star in the East, and went a long journey to find their King. "The merchant represents the sincere inquirer after truth." He sets out deliberately to find the best things in the world. The highest experiences, the loftiest truths, the best of the Kingdom of Heaven are never found accidentally, but are the reward of long and patient search.

The Price to be Paid is the same in both parables. None can obtain the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven without selling all they have to obtain it. This one thing must be first, and all other things subordinate. Everything inconsistent with it must be put away. The one essential thing in these parables is that one must give up all to Jesus Christ. All worldly things cannot be compared with the spiritual blessings of the Kingdom. Seek first the riches of the Kingdom of God, and the righteousness that belongs to it, and all other necessary things will come.

Mahmoud the Idol-Breaker. This story gives us an illustration of giving up all for righteousness, and receiving treasure in return. In this case, however, it was worldly treasure as well.

Mahmoud, the great Mohammedan conqueror of India and hater of idols and idolatry, had reached Sommât and its great idol, 15 feet high, facing the entrance of its temple, and was ready with his battle axe to complete his destruction of idols with this hugest idol's ruin. A long procession of suppliant priests came streaming forth

"with ransom and with homage the resistless one to greet,
Ransom huge of gold they offer, pearls of price and jewels rare."

The Brahmins also threw themselves before the conqueror in vain, for Mahmoud said: "God has not raised me up to traffic on hideous idols. I would rather be known as the breaker than the seller of idols. Stand aside." And lifting high his battle axe he smote the idol, and from its shattered, hollow sides, there poured forth pearls, diamonds, and showers of gold, a hundredfold more than the rejected ransom.

The Joy of the Kingdom. For joy thereof, the finder of the hidden treasure sold all he had in order to obtain the field. And can we imagine the merchantman selling all that he had to obtain the pearl without also imagining his joy when he had obtained that for which he had made such a sacrifice? Christ prayed for his disciples "that my joy may remain in you." The same kind of joy that I have, and to be obtained in the same way. The joy of doing right, of entire consecration to God, of self-denial for others, of perfect faith in a wise and loving God, of communion with God, of loving others and seeing them saved, the joy of victory over the works of the flesh.

The Treasure of the Gospel. "A woman was fishing oysters for home use. Among them she found a pearl. She told her husband, and together they went to the place where the oysters were and fished for more. The woman found a large number of pearls. She knew they were valuable, but did not know how much they were worth. They were taken to a New York firm, and she received more than \$10,000 for them. Was she happy? Of course she was, for she had found a treasure. Well, here is one reason why we should be happy. We have found a treasure — Jesus, the pearl of great price. We know Him, can pray to Him, can read His word, can trust Him every day." — *Mrs. Harriet E. Clark.*

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

47. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

II. THE CONSUMMATION OF THE KINGDOM, vs. 47-53. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net.** A very long net or seine, with floats to keep one edge at the surface, and sinkers to keep the other deep in the water. This net is swept around a shoal of fishes by means of boats, the two ends brought together, and all drawn to the shore. It will of course gather fishes of every sort, good and bad. The Syrian fisherman would find among the other fishes in his net the sting-ray, resembling a flounder, but armed with a long tapering tail ending in a barbed spine, which is a dangerous weapon both for offence or defence. He might also find the dreaded electrical torpedo. "At no time is their catch good throughout, for the Mediterranean teems with a wonderful variety of life including 'each kind of badness' as fishermen there will tell you." — *Prof. W. H. Thomson, in Parables and Their Home.*

But the separation of good and bad is made after the net is brought to the shore. The good, the edible or useful in other ways, will be put into baskets to be used at home, or to be sold for the support of the family. The bad will be thrown away, either back into the water, or if harmful merely cast out to rot on the sands.

The Parable of the Tares in our last lesson referred to the *mingled good and evil in the wide, wide world.* This parable refers to the *mingled good and evil within the limits of the Church itself.*

"In this parable the world is the sea in which live fish of every kind, and the Church is to be a great net let down to gather men out of that sea. The Church was destined in the future to extend immensely, and was to bring within its great folds many other than saints."

Good and bad were to be brought into the Church in the very act of seeking for the good or that which becomes good, because the Church can influence and train by its teaching, by the holy lives of its members, by preaching and by Sunday School, young people's meetings, Y. M. C. A. and every possible means of personal persuading others to become Christians and to find the Kingdom of Heaven.

"The Church of Christ is a sacred and a beautiful ideal. No words of the New Testament are so strong or so tender as those which describe the sweet, blessed bride of the Lord. . . . Since Jesus came to bring his own why should he not draw them out of the world to himself, to be a peculiar people, a holy nation, and all within the same great fold. . . . But let no one think that because he is within the Church therefore must he be gathered with the chosen of God at the last." — *Thomson.*

The people whom the Church has gathered into its influence and organizations prove to be of all kinds of goodness and badness; and even its teachings by imperfect men, its ideas, its principles, are a commingling of good and evil. This is true of the whole regions where the Kingdom of Heaven has been preached. It is true of the organized Church. It is true of every Christian country. It is true of every organized work for making men better in body and soul. It is true of every local church, every Sunday School, every society, and of every individual.

But before the consummation of the age, the end of the world, i.e. of the age, of the kingdom, the completion of the work of each organization, there must be a severing of the wicked from among the just, the righteous. All evil must be burned up in the furnace of fire, together with those in whom the evil is so embodied that they will not separate themselves from it. We see what is meant by the discussion of the Celestial City in Revelation 18-22. For those who refuse to obey God, and are under the influence of Satan and all those who do iniquity, there is the same result. They are unfitted by their own choice to belong to God's kingdom, and unless they repent, turn about and change, they will be destroyed.

But no one need fail of the Kingdom of Heaven save by his own choice. God desires and seeks that every sinner shall repent. His Church's business is to use its

51. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

53. And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

55. Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56. And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

every power to persuade every wrongdoer to become and live as a Christian. "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and cause you to walk in my statutes. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God." (Ezekiel 18:32.)

51-52. **Have ye understood all these things?** Yea, Lord. They did understand much of the teaching, by the aid of Jesus' interpretations. Not that we are to suppose that they understood the things to their summits and their depths. Who ever yet has thus exhausted or comprehended them? But they saw the light of heaven streaming through them; it would increase; and by and by they would see more clearly, more minutely, and more comprehensively.

Therefore, because you have understood, **every scribe who is instructed**, every student and teacher of the Bible who has been also learning of Christ, is like . . . a **householder** at the head of Christ's household, or any division thereof, **which bringeth forth**, flings out, throws forth with vigor and zeal, **out of his treasure**, treasury, storehouse, as water bursts forth from a full vessel, **things new and old**. Some of the new things are far better than the old; sometimes the old are better. Both are needed.

III. **THE REJECTION OF THE KING**, vs. 53-58. **He departed thence.** In Mark, which probably keeps the chronological order of events, this chapter of parables is followed by a long series of wonderful works: the stilling of the tempest, the cure of the Gadarene demoniac, the return to Capernaum, and the raising of the daughter of Jairus.

Then he went into his own country, Nazareth, 20 miles from Capernaum. Here he had been brought up from early childhood, and had spent the most of his life. Here was the home of his mother and family. Here he had worked many years as a carpenter and cabinet-maker, and was well known.

Several months before this, in April A.D. 28, Jesus had proclaimed the Gospel in Nazareth, but had been rejected with violence (Luke 4:14-30). But now he was making another attempt. Then he was almost unknown in that region; now he is well known and famous, attended by a band of disciples, and "the whole land is aflame with the report of his wonderful works and teaching." There was hope that all this might influence them to listen to him.

He taught in their synagogue, their regular place of worship. But they refused to see in him anything but the carpenter of his early days. They knew, and showed that they knew, that he had been at work there for all the years of his life, save the few months between his departure in the early months of A.D. 28, and this time, probably the beginning of A.D. 29. He had never been to the advanced schools, and learned the wisdom of the ancients; he had had no time to study during his years of labor; **Whence then hath this man this wisdom?** And his family had been with them all the time; he was easily proved to be merely the village carpenter.

And they were offended in him. This is one of the few instances when the English verb *scandalize* expresses better the sense of the Greek word of which it is the translation, than any other in the language. To be scandalized is to be offended or shocked by some action considered wrong or outrageous (*Century Dict.*). The contrast between his origin, family, education, on the one hand, and, on the other, the

57. And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.
58. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

expected king, outshining Solomon in all his glory, and triumphing over Rome, was too great for their faith, and they despised and ridiculed his claims.

And he did not mighty works there because of their unbelief. Those who willfully shut their eyes to the beauty of the Kingdom of Heaven, and shut their hearts to its joy, will not enter its glories. The greatness of Jesus Christ and of his followers is most often an invisible quality, the greatness of character. It is often hard to recognize the great genius in the beggar's rags; or the great general without any of his insignia of rank. But those who are searching for the Kingdom, and who are ready and willing to give up everything in the world for it, the revelation will come. The messenger who seeks the commander-in-chief will reach him, even if the commander lacks all the outward signs of his rank and office. It is what Christ was, not what he looked to be, that makes us love and worship him.

But all who reject the King, see nothing in him but a simple Galilean peasant who had dreamed greatly of spiritual things, will lose the greatness of the treasure, of the glory of the King in his eternal Kingdom.

LESSON XII. — December 19.

JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDES. — Matthew 14.

PRINT Matt. 14: 18-28.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat.* — MATT. 14: 16.

Devotional Reading: John 17: 20-26.

Additional Material for Teachers: Matt. 15: 32-38; Mark 6: 32-44; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-13.

Primary Topic: JESUS FEEDS MANY HUNGRY PEOPLE.

Lesson Material: Matt. 14: 13-23.

Memory Verse: He blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples and the disciples to the multitude. Matt. 14: 19.

Junior Topic: JESUS FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND.

Lesson Material: Matt. 14: 13-23.

Memory Verse: Matt. 14: 19.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: HELPING TO FEED THE HUNGRY.

Topic for Young People and Adults: THE MINISTRY OF JESUS TO THE MULTITUDES.

Note: A Christmas Lesson follows, for those who prefer to use it. In some classes both may be used; in others the Christmas Lesson can be used for to-day, and the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand used in connection with the review for next Sunday. Each teacher must decide upon the best for his particular class.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

In the Younger Grades the story will need almost all the time and can be made exceedingly vivid. Those classes which are sufficiently advanced will be interested in the part of the boy whose lunch was used by the Master, and the natural application.

In the Intermediate and Senior classes the lesson should be made most practical,

as they will probably be familiar with the facts as given by the four Gospels. Illustrations and practical methods will be found in the needs of the people of Europe after the Great World War, and of the famine sufferers at various times and in various places, as well as the poor almost at our doors.

The Young People and Adults can study the entire life of Jesus to find just what he did for the crowds who gathered

to hear him not only at this time, but always; his promise to his disciples for their future work for the people; and how this promise is being carried out in our day.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING.

Time.—The death of John the Baptist in March, A.D. 29; and the rest of the chapter in April of the same year, immediately following the reception by Jesus of the news of John's death.

Place.—The death of John the Baptist was at the Castle Macherus, east of the northern part of the Dead Sea. The 5000 were fed on the plain of Butaiha, belonging to Bethsaida (Luke 9:10), on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

THE ROUND TABLE.

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION.

The Herods: which one was John's murderer?
John's preaching against Herod: why?
The story of the martyrdom.
Herod and John: which was the successful man?
Why did Jesus retire from Galilee?
Whence, and for what, came the great multitude?
The lad with the lunch: the Boy Scout.
How Christ uses what we have.
Gather up the fragments.
Jesus the Bread of Life.

THE TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Commentaries on Matthew and on the parallel portions of the other Gospels.
Lives of Christ. *Bible Dictionaries* and books on Bible Geography.

The Two St. Johns of the New Testament, by Dr. James Stalker. Farrar's *The Herods*.

On the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the sea, books on the *Miracles of Jesus*, such as those by Trench, Bruce, Taylor, Macdonald. *Sermons* by Spurgeon, *Ninth Series*; by Mark Hopkins, "That Nothing be Lost"; by H. W. Beecher, "Fragments of Instruction"; by Phillips Brooks, vol. II., "How Many Loaves Have Ye?" *Sermons for the New Life*, Horace Bushnell, p. 354.

THE LESSON IN LITERATURE.

Poems, such as those by Keble, "The Boy with the Five Loaves"; by Browning, "The Boy and the Angel"; by Mrs. Charles, "Is Thy Cruse of Comfort Failing?" George Eliot's *Poem* on Stradivarius. *Hymns*, as Miss Lathbury's "Break Thou the Bread of Life."

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: Jesus Feeding the Hungry Multitude.

- I. JOHN THE BAPTIST, Matt. 14: 1-13.
- II. JESUS' COMPASSION ON THE MULTITUDE, Matt. 14: 13, 14, 34-36.
- III. THE FEEDING OF THE 5000, Matt. 14: 15-23.

The Power of Little Things.
Helping to Feed the Hungry.

- IV. JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER, Matt. 14: 24-33.

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST, Matt. 14: 1-13. John the Baptist was one of the noblest and most heroic men that ever lived. He had preached in the wilderness of Judea to great crowds, with intense earnestness and with the greatest boldness, even to the king, Herod Antipas, himself.

Herod was mightily angry, but because of the popularity of John he did not dare to kill him, as both he and his wife Herodias desired. Therefore he put him in a dungeon in the castle of Macherus.

Herodias was not in the least satisfied with the punishment meted out to John, but she could not persuade Herod to kill him. However, after John had spent a year in prison, "Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, and the high captains, and the chief men of Galilee" (Mark 6: 21), and the daughter of Herodias, Salome, danced.

The audience was fascinated by the novel spectacle, and Herod was so pleased that he promised . . . to give her whatsoever she would ask. "Unto the half of my kingdom," says Mark in his account of the scene; a wild and reckless promise that could only have been made by one who had lost his wits through drunkenness.

Herodias had her plans made. She told Salome, and Salome repeated to the king, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger, a large platter which was charged, i.e. loaded, with meats to be brought to the banquet.

Herod was sorry, not penitent, but troubled and anxious. There was danger in such a gift. Pride, and fear of immediate public opinion, however, turned the scale, for John would have few friends in that assembly.

From that moment began the fall of Herod. In less than ten years, after a war

13. When Jesus heard of *it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart : and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14. And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

15. And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past ; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart ; give ye them to eat.

with Aretas in which he was worsted, he lost his dominions, and soon after miserably died.

The body of John was given to his disciples, who lovingly buried it and then went at once to tell Jesus of what had happened. Jesus was in Galilee, and probably in Capernaum, and Galilee was within the dominions of the Herod who had just killed John. For two reasons Jesus and his disciples might be in danger if they remained there : (1) Herod having begun by killing John might proceed against Jesus and his followers. (2) The people who revered John might be roused to rebel against Herod, and Jesus and the Twelve become involved.

Therefore the next morning after Jesus had learned of the death of John, he with the Twelve went across the Sea of Galilee into the dominion of Herod Philip, where they would be safe from Antipas.

Another reason is given by Mark and Luke. The Twelve had just returned from their preaching tour, and wished to report to their Master their experiences and their success. But the people so crowded upon them that " they had no leisure so much as to eat."

II. JESUS' COMPASSION FOR THE MULTITUDES, Matt. 14 : 13, 14, 34-36. But the multitudes, learning where Jesus and his disciples were gone, followed him on foot from the surrounding cities. And Jesus went forth, from the quiet place where he had been talking with his disciples, we do not know for how long ; possibly it was toward noon. And he healed their sick. After his return to Capernaum we see the same thing ; the great compassion of Jesus for the multitudes of sick and weary who crowded around him.

The Compassion of Jesus. " These words [v. 14] do not indicate an occasional mood of Jesus, nor a sudden and passing emotion. They present the constant attitude and invariable feeling of Jesus toward men. The compassion of Jesus is the expression of God's compassion toward men. The Old Testament says much about the compassion of God. . . . But it remained for Jesus to bring in his own person the greatest proof and the highest expression of God's compassion. . . .

" And he has in no respect changed. . . . In the Divine Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the compassionate Christ is still in the world, and ministers his compassion to men. . . .

" But we miss the deepest significance of Christ's compassion, if we see . . . only a desire to relieve their physical need. It was always of the spiritual needs of man that Christ most thought even while he ministered to their bodily needs. . . ." — *From a Sermon by Rev. Gorham Easterbrook.*

III. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND, Matt. 14 : 15-23. By putting all the accounts together we have a simple, natural story.

THE TWELVE came to Jesus toward evening, between three and six o'clock, after some hours of teaching and healing.

JESUS (*speaking to Philip, whose home was at Bethsaida*) : " Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat ? " (John).

PHILIP : " Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one may take a little " (John). (The silver penny, which was the standard wage for a day for unskilled labor. The amount was as great for that time as \$300 or \$400 at least would be now.)

THE APOSTLES : " Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread : for they have nothing to eat " (Mark). The majority were probably Passover pilgrims, not residents of near-by towns or villages.

JESUS : " They have no need to go away ; give ye them to eat " (Matt.).

17. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.
 18. He said, Bring them hither to me.
 19. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.
 20. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.
 21. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.
 22. And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.
 23. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

THE APOSTLES (*aghast*): " Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat ? " (Mark).

JESUS : " How many loaves have ye ? Go and see " (Mark).

ANDREW (*returning from the search, and speaking for the apostles*) : " There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fishes ; but what are they among so many ? " (John). The loaves were flat round cakes about six inches in diameter, and the fishes small like our sardines or smoked herring.

JESUS : " Bring them hither to me " (John).

The boy with his small amount of food was then probably led to Jesus.

JESUS : " Make the people sit down [better, *recline*] on the green grass in companies of fifty and a hundred."

This was for three reasons : (1) That there might be no unseemly crowding, with the disasters and crushing of the weak, which would naturally follow a rush ; (2) " that they might understand they were to have a full meal and not a mere bite they could take in their hand in passing " (*Exp. Grk. Test.*) ; (3) for the convenience of the distribution, so that none should be overlooked. John says that " there was much grass in that place." It was luxuriant, and made a comfortable resting place. Being arranged in regular companies of definite sizes made the number easily reckoned, and it was **five thousand, besides women and children.**

JESUS then **took the loaves** and the fishes, and **looking up to heaven** as the source of all good, **he blessed** (Matt.). The word differs little from the word used by John, " he gave thanks." The Greek means " praised, celebrated with praise." The act was natural and simple enough, the " saying grace " of the head of a Jewish household as he gathered his family around him. This is a beautiful custom, and helps to make the true atmosphere of the family.

And brake pieces of the bread for distribution. Gave them to his disciples to set before them. Jesus' method was the least ostentatious way of performing this wonder. " A wonder-worker would have touched the loaves, and made them swell and multiply before the crowd." — *Morrison*. " One can fancy how doubtingly and grudgingly the apostles doled out the supplies at first, and how the portion of each was increased as group after group was provided and no diminution appeared in Christ's full hands." — *Alexander Maclaren*.

And the two fishes. Mark indicates that they were given separately after the division of the bread. These small fishes were only eaten as a relish. " Some would give the poor only the barest necessities, bread only ; our Lord adds fish." — *Spurgeon*.

And they did all eat and were filled. They did not merely have enough to sustain life and strength until they could reach their evening destination and buy more. They were filled, fully satisfied. So Jesus with his bread from heaven satisfies the hunger of the soul.

Not only was there a sufficient amount of food for all the multitude, but there was a great quantity left over. Jesus told his disciples therefore, " Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost " (John). This gathering up of the fragments was an object lesson of precious truth, and completed the proof of the miracle,

for more remained than there was to begin with. Twelve baskets full. "They were small hand-baskets specially provided for the Jews to carry Levitically clean food when travelling in Samaria or other heathen districts." — *Professor Vincent*. "Their sizes were probably variable, but the word is used for a Bœotian measure of capacity equal to two gallons." — *Prof. A. Macalister*.

Gather up the Fragments. Let nothing be wasted or lost in God's work. Using well or wasting the fragments of time, of opportunity, the nooks and corners of life, makes all the difference between success and failure. Gather up the fragments of time: "the nearer the night the faster should go the fingers." Gather up the fragments of opportunity, — it often knocks at our doors but once. Gather up the fragments of wealth, save the pennies that you may have pounds to give to God. He who saves nothing fails "either because of human imperfection or of sin." Gather up the fragments of character; any holy practice long neglected, and besetting sin still unresisted.

Science as well as religion says, "Gather up the fragments." Many of the most useful things are now made of what was once thrown away. "The history of progress is largely the history of the elimination of waste, and it has become almost a commonplace that most of the profits of to-day result from the saving of the waste of yesterday." — *Youth's Companion*.

THE POWER OF LITTLE THINGS. "If any one will do his best to use what talent he has he will be successful. What matters it how small the lad or the leaves when we place our all in the hands of the Christ? He can multiply our power and gifts till they will bless thousands. Therefore we should never forget to estimate rightly the riches of the Silent Partner in our firm."

"St. Martin, upon entering a certain city, saw a beggar asking alms. Having no money to give, he took his knife and cut his cloak in half, giving the beggar one of the halves. That night he had a dream. He saw Jesus, who had on his shoulders the half of his cloak he had given to the beggar, and he heard the sweet words, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me.' Our little gifts go a great way when they reach the Master. He increases our influence and our charities till they become worldwide, blessing the giver with joy, and the multitude with plenty. He will make our little efforts by his miraculous power work together for the greatest good." — *Rev. E. W. Caswell*.

HELPING TO FEED THE HUNGRY. Jesus conferred a great privilege upon the disciples in making them the instruments of his bounty. Jesus could have rained manna from heaven, or summoned angels to help, — but he gave the privilege to his disciples.

And it is to his disciples, his followers, to-day that the Lord intrusts the feeding of his hungry people. There is first the physical hunger which must be met, the actual giving of bread and other necessities to the poor and starving of our own town, if such there are; of our country, wherever they can be found; and the starving in Europe, after the Great World War which devastated so many fruitful fields, and slew so many who should have been providing food for themselves and their families.

But fully as important as this physical satisfaction of the needy is the sharing of the spiritual blessings which God has so lavishly bestowed upon his children. The lands without the Gospel are appealing to us for light; the open doors are so numerous and the opportunities are so great that we have no excuse for not helping. The appeals from China for Western education and religion; the opening of the doors in Japan and India to the coming of the Gospel of Christ; the opportunities through the new era in the lands ruled so long by the Turk; all seem to crowd upon us for aid, — and what is our power and ability among so many?

But the hope of the world's salvation is in the wonderful power of God to multiply the littles. When we give freely to others of that which God gave freely to us, we shall find that we have more left than we received at first; the more one does for Christ the more is available to use for him. If you bring no gift how can God use it? The lad must bring the five barley loaves before the five thousand can be filled. Have you ever attempted to do as he did? It is not that God has not the power to feed the hungry, physically and spiritually, without our help. It is that it is not His will to do so; it is not in His plan. It is better for ourselves and for the world that we shall do our share in the work.

Matthew tells us that **straightway**, immediately, after the feeding of the multitude, Jesus constrained his disciples, urged them, compelled them by his authority contrary to their own desires, to go before him unto the other side of the lake. John

tells us the reason. Jesus perceived that the people were coming to take him by force and make him their king, feeling after this miracle that he must be the long-expected Messiah. What a leader he would be, whose armies could march into the most barren regions and never think about supplies ! who could heal the wounded and raise the dead ! And could he not by the same mighty power strike his enemies dead ?

It was the same temptation which had come to Jesus in the wilderness. The temptation to exchange the spiritual kingdom of God in the hearts of men for an earthly kingdom ; to use his divine power for the upbuilding of an earthly throne ; to fulfill the expectations of the Jews for a great earthly monarch, instead of being the Saviour of mankind through all the ages of the world.

Very likely he saw in the faces of some at least of his disciples the assent to the opinions which were being expressed by the people. He must be alone, with God, to fight this temptation. So he sent his disciples away, constrained them to go without him, and himself retired alone into the hills back of the plain of Butaiha, to pray.

IV. JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER, Matt. 14 : 24-33. The disciples in their boat were trying to reach the other side of the lake, or perhaps Bethsaida, where Jesus might meet them in the morning, and go with them back to Capernaum. But the wind was contrary, was blowing from the direction in which they desired to go, and was so strong that they could make no headway against it.

In the fourth watch of the night, that is at some time between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus went out to them, walking on the waves. The story is familiar. Thinking Jesus a spirit the disciples are sore afraid. Jesus in his tender love says, "Be of good cheer ; it is I ; be not afraid."

Then comes Peter's attempt to walk on the water to meet his Lord ; his success so long as he keeps his eyes fixed on Jesus ; his failure as soon as he looks at the difficulties in the way ; and Jesus' prompt rescue of his doubting disciple.

And then, when they were come into the boat, as soon as Jesus was with his disciples, the wind ceased. The presence of Jesus brings peace.

Contrary Winds. In every life there are contrary winds opposing our progress, interfering with our hopes, fierce temptations urging us from our course of duty. And yet all these are meant to be a means of strength, of training, of education, of higher character. They mean sweeter harps, higher thrones, brighter crowns. And if we take Jesus fully into our hearts and our lives the contrary winds will cease, and we shall quickly reach the port for which we are striving.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS (Christmas Lesson). — Luke 2 : 8-20.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *There is born to you to-day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.* — LUKE 2 : 11.

Additional Material for Teachers: Matthew 1 and 2.

Primary Topic: THE GIFT OF THE BABY JESUS.

Lesson Material: Luke 2 : 1-20.

Memory Verse: God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.
John 3 : 16.

Junior Topic: THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS.

Lesson Material: Luke 2 : 8-20.

Memory Verse: Luke 2 : 11.

Intermediate and Senior Topic: A SAVIOUR BORN.

Topic for Young People and Adults: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCARNATION.

THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS.

In case the Christmas lesson is made use of, the younger grades will profit most by studying in the main the story of Christmas, for it will never become too familiar to us. For the young people and adults there is a wonderful opportunity to study the real meaning of the incarnation, treating it with the deep reverence it deserves, searching the Scriptures to find prophecies and ful-

fillments and meanings, of the earthly life of Jesus Christ.

PLAN OF THE LESSON.

SUBJECT: The Birth of the Saviour of Mankind.

- I. THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH.
- II. THE DIVINE AND HUMAN SAVIOUR.
- III. HOW SHOULD WE KEEP CHRISTMAS?
- IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCARNATION.

I. THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH. Mary and Joseph, each a lineal descendant of the great king David, and living in Nazareth in Galilee, were obliged to travel to Bethlehem in Judea, for the enrolment by the Romans which probably preceded a new adjustment of the taxation.

On reaching the town they found it so full of others who had come for the same reason as themselves, that "there was no room for them in the inn." They found a place in a cave used as a stable; and there on that night Mary "brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger."

In that same night, in the fields around the town, were shepherds watching their flocks. To them appeared the glory of the Lord, and an angel who said, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And a chorus of angels joined in the great song of praise:

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,
AND ON EARTH PEACE,
GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.

And the shepherds, when the angels had gone, "came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."

Other visitors the infant Jesus had during the early days of his earthly life. Wise men from the East came saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." And "when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold and frankincense, and myrrh."

II. THE DIVINE AND HUMAN SAVIOUR. Only a Saviour who is both God and man can be the true Saviour of mankind. He must be *divine*, or He could not have power to save all men at all times, in all places, under all circumstances. Only God is wise enough and good enough to save us. Only a divine Saviour can lead to victory over all the forces of evil; only He could make atonement for sin; only He could represent God truly to us; only He could be forever before us as our ideal, leading us onward and upward through eternity. The incarnation is no afterthought.

We cannot explain the mystery of the union of God and man in one Person, Jesus Christ. But we can prove that it is possible and reasonable, by a similar mystery in ourselves. For each of us has a union of body and soul in one person. This is a fact; but before it became a fact it would have seemed contradictory and unthinkable, that the immaterial spirit should unite with visible matter; that the two should be distinct, and yet form one person.

The Man Christ Jesus entered the world as does every child to-day, weak and helpless, dependent on the care of others. He grew as does any boy, "increasing in wisdom and strength." He was "subject" to his parents, as human children must be to-day. This human side of the Master is given in Matthew and Luke.

John gives both the divine and the human side of the Saviour: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." (John 1: 1-5, 14.)

III. HOW SHOULD WE KEEP CHRISTMAS? 1. *Christmas is especially the children's day.* The Son of God came into the world a little child. He is the children's Saviour. Jesus loved the children, and still loves them. He called them to come unto Him, while they were young. He said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19: 14). He said to His disciples, at a time when each wanted the great places in the kingdom which they thought their Master would soon proclaim — "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18: 3, 4).

The coming of Jesus as a child has sanctified childhood and motherhood and the home, giving them a new meaning and power, and has shown the importance of childhood in the training of the human race. The Sunday School with its weekly gathering of the children to study about God and Christ, and the Christian home, are the means of keeping in mind the greatest event in the history of the world, — the coming of the Christ more than 1920 years ago.

2. *Christmas should be a time of rejoicing.* To little children the receiving of gifts seems the most natural and greatest source of joy. But a Christmas which gives to

the children of the rich so many toys that they care nothing for any of them, and leaves out the poor and needy, is not a time of universal rejoicing, and to some people the misery drowns out the joy. Give to the children who have not much given to them, for they can receive gifts, without injuring their self-respect, at this time more than at any other time.

3. *Christmas should be a time of giving.* It is the celebration of the coming of the greatest Gift that has ever come to mankind; a Gift to every person on the earth, of every rank, of every nation, of every degree of poverty or riches. Christmas is a fine opportunity for expressing our love to our friends, but also for giving joy to all with whom we can come in contact. There is no celebration of any event in the whole year that is so helpful and blessed as this, the echoes of God's gracious love in the gift of His Son for man.

(1) We should give ourselves to God. This is the best gift we can possibly give, — our hearts, our love, our loyalty.

(2) We should give as a token of friendship both to those who are near and to those who are far away. But this does not of necessity mean the spending of a great sum of money: often a card with a loving message is as much of a delight as a costly gift. It is often the thought rather than the material gift that gives the pleasure.

(3) We should train the children to give. It is a real blessing to them to give special gifts according to their power. No child should be allowed to receive gifts and not give to others, after he is old enough to understand.

(4) We should give our service to those for whom Christ gave Himself, ministering in His name to the poor, the sick, the suffering, the ignorant, the lost, — doing according to our ability what Jesus would do if He were here.

"Not what we give, but what we share —
For the gift without the giver is bare;

Who gives himself with his alms feeds three —
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

— Lowell.

(5) We should not give as a matter of business, because others have given to us. We should not try to give as much as some one else has given us, as a matter of bargain. We should not send our gifts in the hope of a return of at least equal value. We should not give as a social duty.

4. *Christmas should last all the year round.* Only thus will the Golden Age come to this earth.

IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCARNATION. (The Topic for Young People and Adults.) This subject is too vast for any proper treatment in this place. The topic should be studied at home in some of the many books treating of the birth of Jesus Christ, Commentaries, books on the deity of Jesus Christ, etc. These can be found in any library which has a fair number of religious books; and as some are obtainable in one place and some in another it is hardly worth while to enumerate the few that there might be room to put in here.

What is the meaning of "Incarnation"? According to the *Century Dictionary* it is: "The act of clothing with flesh; the act of assuming flesh, or a human body, and the nature of man; the state of being incarnated. The doctrine that the Divine Being has assumed human nature, or has dwelt on the earth in a human form. The orthodox opinion is that God, in Jesus Christ his Son, not merely assumed a human body, and became subject to the limitations of the human flesh, but that he also assumed a proper human nature, and so is at once truly God and truly Man."

The Significance of the Time in which Christ Came. It was the one best time in the history of the world. In no other period before or since have so many things combined to make the coming of Christ effective for the redemption of mankind, as at the period of his birth. This was a most marvellous providence of God.

1. It was a time of intellectual and spiritual awakening.

2. The Roman Government included nearly the whole civilized world, so that the preachers of the gospel could travel safely.

3. The Greek language was spoken everywhere with the native language so that the gospel could be heard and read by all.

4. It was a period of almost universal peace, — practically the only such period for centuries.

5. The Jews had been dispersed through all lands, carrying with them the Old Testament, which bore witness to one God, and held the prophecies of the Messiah. Read D. R. Breed's *Preparation of the World for Christ*.

Writing at this time, at what seems the close of the Great World War, which has

REVIEW: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH.

been ravaging the earth for more than four years, it is most fitting that we study even more closely than usual the ideal of Christ for the world ; the brotherhood of man which He came to bring. Not a brotherhood of merely physical and material things ; but a brotherhood of peace, and love, and generosity, and Christian justice.

"The fire of Bethlehem's guiding star
Thrills yet the purpling night;
The war clouds of a world in arms
Cannot obscure that light.

"The music out of Bethlehem's sky
Still floats across the sea;
The thunder of a million guns
Drowns not its prophecy."

— *From Prof. Henry Turner Bailey's Poem, Christmas, 1914.*

LESSON XIII. — December 26.

REVIEW: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH.

SELECTION FOR READING: Isaiah 25 : 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.— *And he that sitteth on the throne said: Behold, I make all things new.* — REV. 21 : 5.

Additional Material for Teachers : Revelation 21.

Primary Topic : STORIES ABOUT JESUS.

Memory Verse : Jesus . . . went about doing good. Acts 1 : 8.

Junior Topic : JESUS' WORDS AND DEEDS.

Memory Verse : John 3 : 16.

Intermediate and Senior Topic : THE WORK AND TEACHING OF JESUS.

Topic for Young People and Adults : THE BEGINNINGS OF THE KINGDOM.

The Quarter we have just been studying includes the first fourteen chapters of the Gospel of Matthew ; the Gospel of the Kingdom. Each lesson adds some points with regard to the Kingdom of Heaven which Jesus came to this earth to found, and of which he is the eternal King.

In order that we may realize Who and What Jesus Christ was and is, and what powers he possesses, it is necessary that we should place together all the forces and instrumentalities used in the work of the redemption of the world. We must see what Jesus planned to do ; what his mission to the world was ; the methods by which he carried out that mission ; his reception by the people of his own time and land.

For the Younger Classes there should be a review of the stories and events of the lessons of the Quarter. This can be done in many ways. Except in the youngest primary class the pupils should be encouraged to tell the stories themselves ; with perhaps additions and corrections by others of the class. Another method is the telling of the story by the teacher, either (1) with pauses at certain places for the pupils to add the word, or the fact, or the name ; or (2) told in such a way as to leave the names of the actors or some of the facts for them to supply.

The lessons will be more interesting if pictures relating to the different events are shown. One method of review may be to have the picture of the event or the place, and have the pupils tell the story.

A BIBLE GAME REVIEW can be made very interesting, but it would most probably be too long for the Sunday School hour. When possible to have the Review at a class meeting at home on some week-day evening, or on some other time on Sunday, it would be well worth while. This would be a good plan for this special Quarter : the Christmas lesson, — or the lesson on the Feeding of the Multitudes, — could then be used in the Sunday School hour in place of the Review.

A "PUT-YOURSELF-IN-HIS-PLACE" REVIEW. Make a list of persons concerned with these lessons, and give each scholar a list in advance, for him to answer the question, — "What lessons should — have learned from these events?" To answer

these questions the scholar will be obliged to bring together all the lessons in which each character appears.

A "QUESTION-EXCHANGE" REVIEW. Every scholar is to write out, at home, two questions of his own on each lesson we are reviewing. His questions are to be on the points that he considers the most difficult, and each question is to be written on a separate slip of paper. In the class these questions will all be jumbled together in a box, and the scholars will draw them in turn and answer them. If desired, a record may be kept of the number that each scholar answers correctly.

The Older Classes can spend the greater part of the lesson period in the application of these events and teachings to the world of to-day. Never was there so great a need as the years after the close of the Great World War of learning what sort of Saviour the world needs ; and how fully and lovingly Jesus Christ meets all the conditions of world-Saviour, and world-King. Apply Jesus' teachings to the world-problems, and to the individual hearts ; and compare the result with the facts that actually exist.

1. We need a Saviour who can speak with authority about God and heaven.
2. We need a Saviour who loves the world with a measureless love.
3. We need a Saviour who will blot out forever our sins and failures.
4. We need a new heart which will make sin hateful and right natural.
5. We need every inspiration to give us the victory over evil.
6. We need an ideal, a living example, a goal toward which to move.
7. We need the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.
8. We need a Leader whom we can love and follow with patriotic loyalty.
9. We need a human Saviour, who can sympathize with our difficulties and our griefs.
10. We need a divine Saviour, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent.

There is but one person in all history of whom the above is true : "Jesus Christ, the Word of God, Who became flesh, and dwelt among us ; Who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Bernard Shaw said, during the Great War : "I am ready to admit that, after contemplating the world of human nature for nearly sixty years, I see no way out of the world's misery but the way which would have been found by Christ's will if He had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman."



"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field."

Matthew 13:44.

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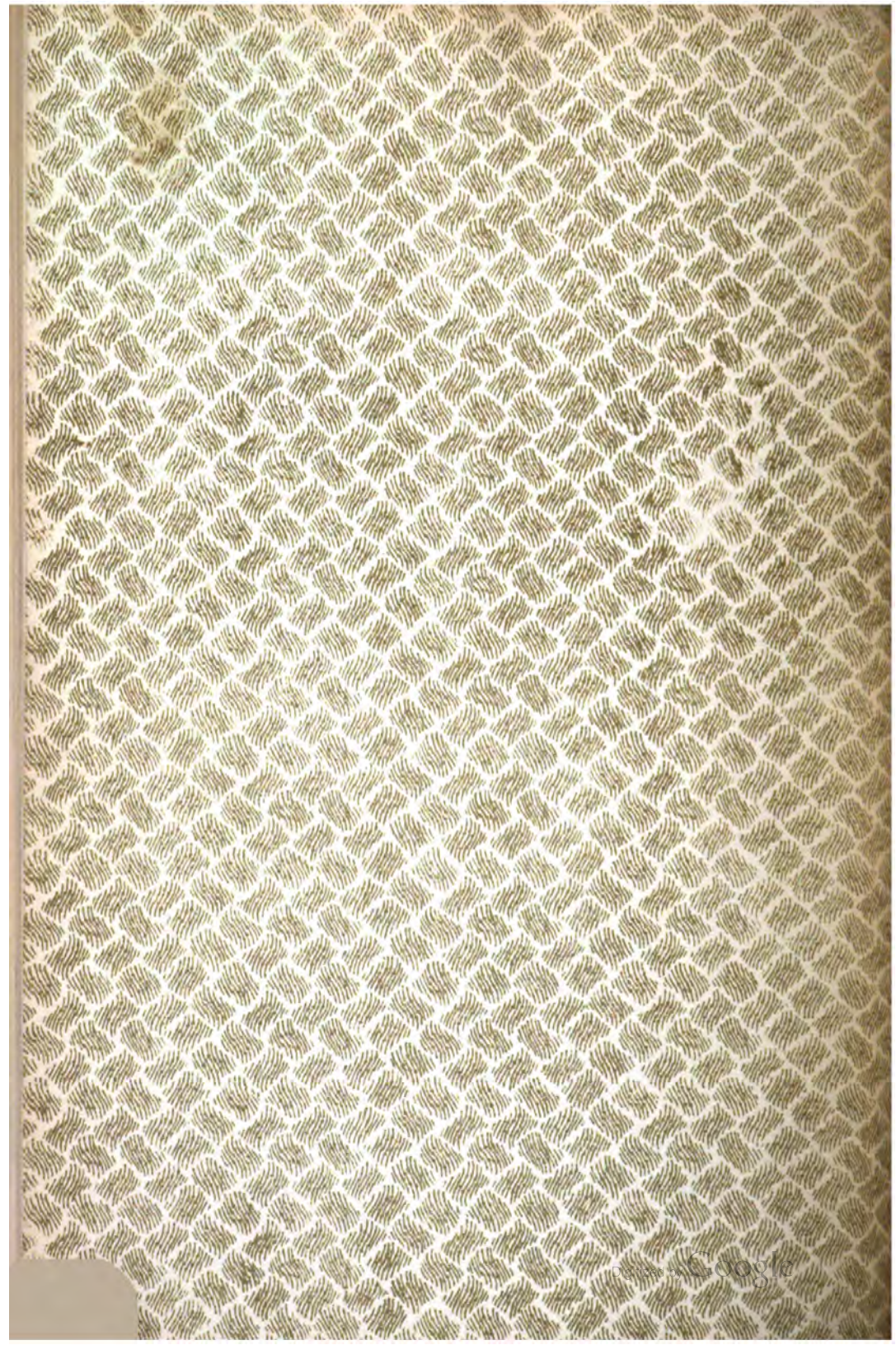
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